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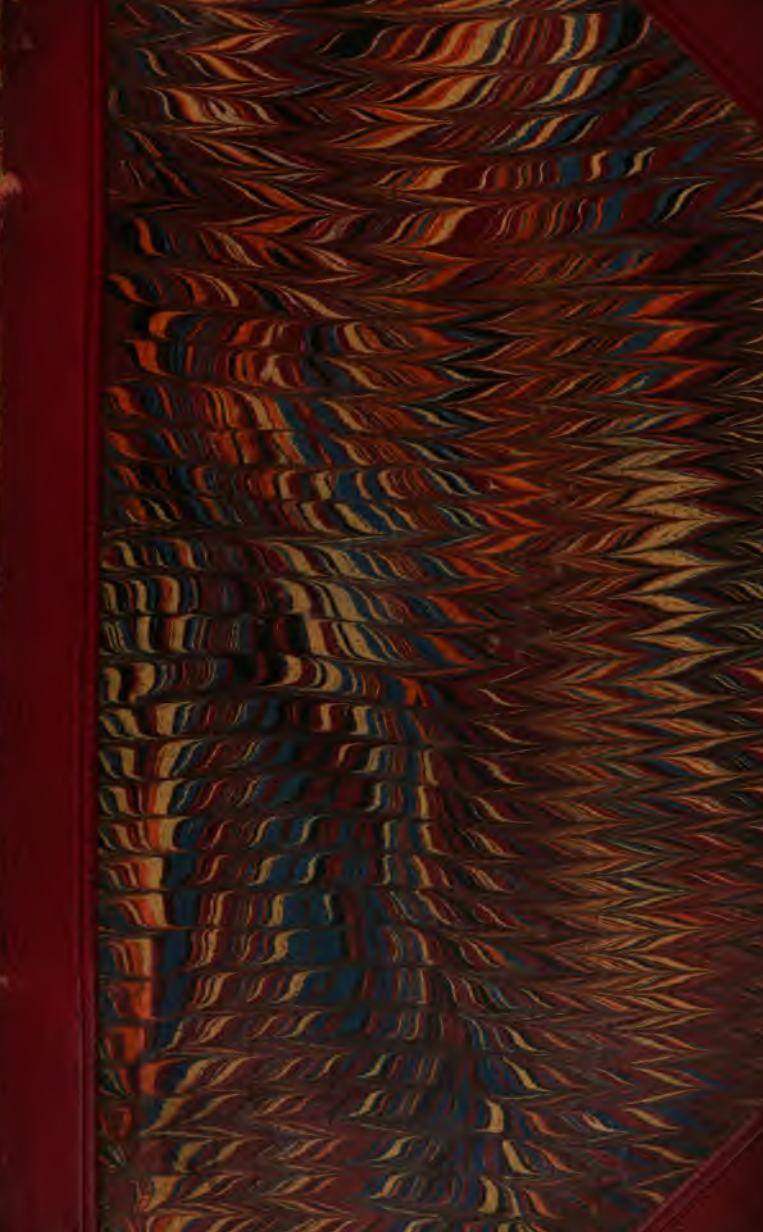
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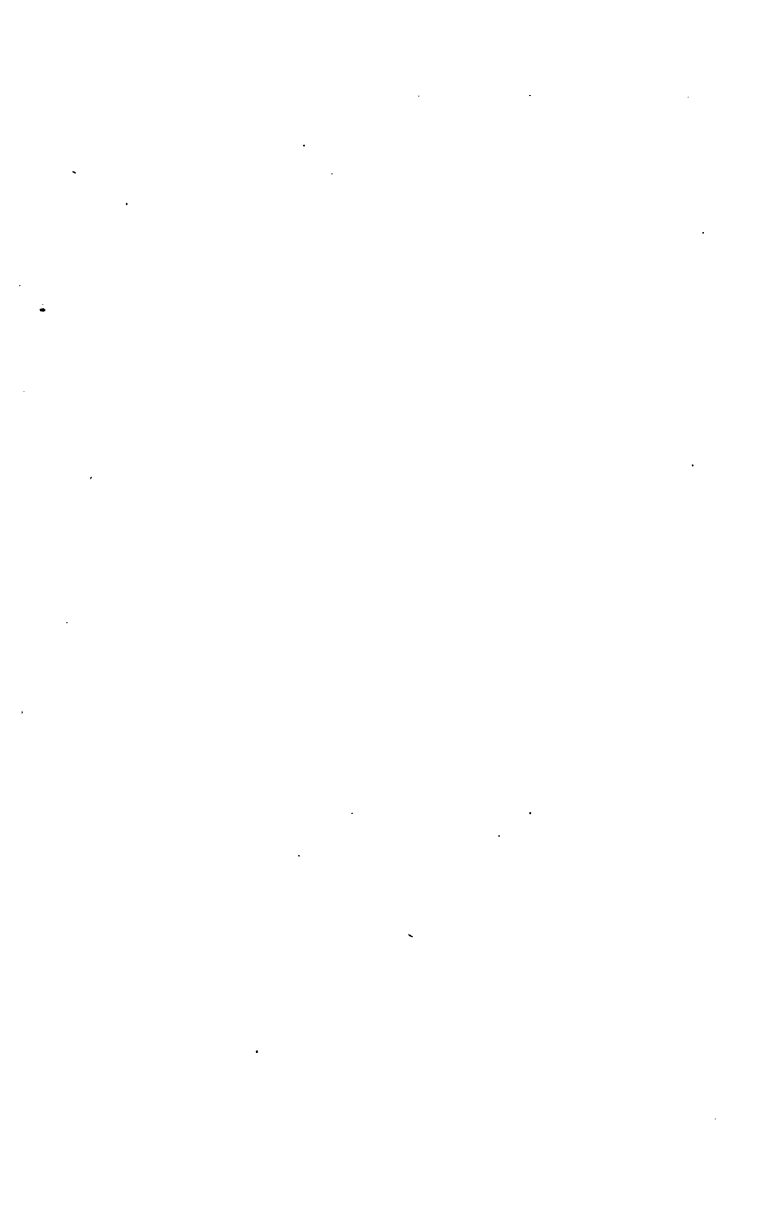


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Thorhilda at the sacred fountain

London: Published 1845, by Longman, Brown & Co.

THE
NOVELS AND ROMANCES
OF
ANNA ELIZA BRAY.

HENRY DE POMEROY.



*Berry Pomeroy Castle,
Devon.*

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HENRY DE POMEROY:

OR,

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

A LEGEND OF CORNWALL AND DEVON.

ALSO,

THE WHITE ROSE:

A DOMESTIC TALE.

BY

MRS. BRAY.

Can such things be
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?

SHAKSPERE.

A NEW EDITION,

REVISED AND CORRECTED, WITH NOTES BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1846.

LONDON :
Printed by Manning and Mason, Ivy Lane, St. Paul's.

TO
CAPTAIN SIR WILLIAM SYMONDS, R.N.

ETC. ETC. ETC.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

THOSE who know how actively you are engaged in pursuits of a high and important nature connected with the station you hold as Surveyor of the Navy to a country such as England, may wonder that I should venture to inscribe to you a work of fiction.

I should, indeed, wonder at it myself, were I less intimately acquainted with the versatility of your genius and your taste. But well do I know that a love of chivalrous lore, and of recording with your pen the romantic incidents of your own travels, as well as those more general observations on the moral and physical peculiarities of foreign lands, are no less marked features in your mind, than its capabilities for those great naval inventions and improvements which have so honourably connected your name with the history of your country, and entitles you to its gratitude.

But it is not merely on account of your taste for poetry and the romance of the Middle Ages, that I venture to dedicate

to you "Henry de Pomeroy;" as I am far more anxious you should receive such dedication as a testimony of my deep sense of the kindness, the hospitality, and the continued friendship, for which both Mr. Bray and myself owe you a debt of gratitude, that can never cease to be acknowledged by,

My dear SIR WILLIAM,

Your most sincere and faithfully obliged friend,

ANNA ELIZA BRAY.

*The Vicarage, Tavistock,
Dec. 22, 1845.*

HENRY DE POMEROY.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

Though sluggards deem it but a foolish chase,
And marvel men should quit their easy chair,
The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace,
O there is sweetness in the mountain air,
And life that bloated ease can never hope to share.

BYRON'S *Childe Harold*.

I had long entertained the wish to visit that part of Devon known by the name of the South Hams, but not so designated, I presume, as an ingenious historian once conjectured, in honour of Ammon, who, he states, was worshipped by the Druid priesthood on the southern coast of that county; for as the word Ham was anciently applied to a low pasture ground, situated near a river or the sea, this circumstance alone seems to point out the source whence the Hams derived their name, as the cattle ground of Devon.

But I will no longer detain my reader respecting the disputed etymology of one of the most lovely portions of our county; suffice it to say, that my wish to visit these far-famed valleys was, at length, kindly indulged by my partner, not only in this journey, but in life also; and in the summer of 1838, we commenced that memorable expedition, replete with consequences of so much import to ourselves, and, I trust, to you, my gentle reader, in your progress through the work, more especially should you find in it wherewithal to amuse an idle hour, or to afford you any useful information. And I

would strongly advise you to bear in mind the maxim of a very great author, who was also a very good man, as it will be profitable to us both; namely, "Not to fall into the bad habit of reading too critically," by which he means ill-humouredly, caustically, sourly; but rather to recollect that an author's book is, generally speaking, like the author himself, a compound, not all good, nor yet all bad:—

"Our virtues would be proud, if our vices whipt them not;
And our vices would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues."

Remember, reader, how much of time and thought goes to the composition of a book (if it be at all worth the perusal), through which you glide onward in a few hours with so much ease. Think of the days, weeks, and months of study, that an author, at least in many instances, must undergo, merely to prepare his own mind for a subject that is to instruct or delight thine. Think of his health, his temper, his feelings, his anxiety, the trials he must endure, the wear and tear of these things, in the progress of writing, printing, and publishing. And then think how liable he is to be mistaken by others, or to be misrepresented by those who are his enemies, to be censured by the ill-natured, and hated by the envious, who are not the least bitter of his foes. Think, too, of his labour; that the spirit of his subject, like other Spirits, will sometimes be elusive as well as delusive; and that, like the Devil and Owen Glendower, he will not always "come when you do call for him."

Take, therefore, whatever thou canst find good in an author, and lay it to thy heart, and esteem him and thyself the better for having good thoughts and feelings in common. And what thou likest not, or what liketh not thee, give it, at least, so much of thy charity as to think, hadst thou been in the writer's place, thou mightest not have done better, and such thoughts as these shall never harm thee. And when, also, the author's labour is considered, recollect the exclamation of good old Bishop Hall, who lived in the times of King James the First, when he thus comments on one of the vanities of this world in the pains of composition:—"What scratching of heads do we find in the closets of our scholars." Think, therefore, gentle reader, of the difficulties of authorship with some commiseration, and make a large allowance for faults, wherever you find something of nature, for that is the salt of a book whatever be its subject, and that ought to cover a multitude of sins, though not if they be sins that militate either against

morals or religion. For in thy most critical mood, my reader, ever bear in mind that the priest and the barber, in the expurgation of Don Quixote's library, would not suffer the house-keeper and niece to send flying out of the window, as an accumulation to the pile of condemned books, "*Tirante the White*," simply because there was in it so much of nature that the knights ate, drank, slept, made their wills, and died in their beds like other people, "with several other things," said the priest, "not to be found in other books of the kind, and therefore do we spare him." And if, my reader, you should now and then find a passage too grave, or too copious, take as thy remedy the maxim of the very judicious Spanish critic just quoted, that "there cannot be too much of what is really good:" and be it also recollected that, though a writer may fail to teach patience in the argument of his book, it is well if he does so by his own example, to bear all that may await him, for good or evil, with an equal mind; and those who gain the admirable virtue of a practical patience, acquire that which will make any burden light in their progress through the world. To sum up all, let me recommend to you, my gentle reader, to select, not only from these pages, but from whatever you may read, the passages or morsels most healthful in themselves and most suited to your taste, and leave the rest to those who are indifferent about the matter.

But no longer to digress, I shall commence at once with noticing that part of our journey which gave rise to the following work, our visit to the very ancient and very interesting ruins of the Castle of Berry Pomeroy, near Totness, in Devonshire.

My companion had visited it many years before, but now scarcely recognised it again, so much was it altered by the course of time. To me it was all new ground; and my impressions, therefore, were perhaps more lively than his on the present occasion. I do not wonder that he found some difficulty in recognising an old acquaintance here, for the very gateway of the castle was so hidden by trees, and so overgrown with ivy, that, on a first approach, it is no easy matter to make out what it is.

We had left the carriage in which we drove to the spot; and a nice little girl, who told us she was ten years old, had accompanied us from a cottage near the entrance of the wood, with the keys of the castle; and under her guidance, we were now to proceed to the inspection of the ruins.

Passing under the gateway, we ascended to what is generally called the chapel; but which was evidently the guard-room, above the entrance, as the opening for the fall of the portcullis still remains in the walls. Here are three arches supported on rough columns, of a very ancient appearance. The flanking towers of the gateway lead to the ramparts; and all this part of the building, I am convinced, is of high antiquity: most likely the work of that De Pomeroy on whom the manor was bestowed by William the Conqueror, and who was the original founder of this once stupendous castle.

The most striking parts of the edifice, those situated within the interior court, are, as may be seen at a glance, of the Tudor age. The doorways of the roofless apartments, the mullions of the square-headed windows, etc., are all of the period of Henry the Seventh. Nor does this fact at all invalidate the account given by Prince, in the "Worthies of Devon," when he mentions that a Seymour, at a subsequent period, laid out twenty thousand pounds on this part of the building. Such a sum might easily, even in his days, be expended on improvements and repairs; and Prince states that this large expenditure was principally devoted to the costly decorations of the interior.

When Henry the Seventh ascended the throne, he took the Castle of Berry Pomeroy from the Baron la Zouch, on account of his having espoused the cause of Richard the Third, and bestowed it on that celebrated knight, Sir Piers Edgcumbe, who had rendered him such essential services, when he was Earl of Richmond, and only a pretender to the crown. Every part of the kingdom was so drained by the wars of the red and white roses, that the monasteries and churches were almost totally neglected, and many of the castles nearly ruined for want of repair, after the dilapidations they had undergone in these long protracted contests, so detrimental to the welfare of the kingdom at large.

Peace once more restored, by the union of the roses, the princes, barons, and knights, had leisure to repair, rebuild, and adorn the ecclesiastical and civil edifices of every description. That they did so in the west is most conspicuous, as there is scarcely a church or ancient mansion in that part of England, but it bears evidence of having undergone some repairs or additions about the time of Henry the Seventh.

That the gateway and the most ancient portions of Berry Pomeroy are of Norman construction, I do not doubt. That something was added to the original castle by the celebrated

Sir Henry de Pomeroy, who figured in the reign of Richard the First, is very likely; and that La Zouch also repaired and made additions to it is more than probable; but that the whole of the interior building, the palace (for so it might be called), was the work of Sir Piers Edgcumbe, admits, I think, of no question, as it has none of the florid decoration, none of that mixture of the Grecian with the Gothic, which we may see in similar works of the time of Henry the Eighth, and still more so in the heavy and ungraceful architecture of the reign of Elizabeth.

After a careful survey of the whole, we could not help saying that Berry Pomeroy would be a most interesting ruin, if it were not so encumbered with brambles and trees, as in many places you can see nothing else. That portion of the castle which is stationed on the esplanade, above a rocky precipice at the back of the building, is so completely surrounded by trees that you are scarcely conscious you are near a precipice till on its very verge. Indeed at this spot, only heaps of rubbish indicate the foundations of exterior walls, long since fallen into ruin, and the castle is so much injured and dilapidated along the whole range of the esplanade, that only fragments of four lofty towers remain. Here, therefore, the ruin is most complete.

On our coming to this place, our little fairy-footed guide took us to the very verge of the precipice, and said—but I must not say what she said, as it would be anticipating; suffice it then to mention, that on the very spot where such extraordinary circumstances are said to have occurred, the little creature related to us the romantic tradition respecting that Sir Henry de Pomeroy who flourished in the reign of Richard the First, and to whom I have already alluded as one of the lords of Berry Pomeroy Castle. This tale of "old tradition" I had before heard; but there was a double interest in listening to it under the shadow of these ancient walls.

The same intelligent little person added, "and this is the place also where the castle was taken in the time of Charles the First. They took it by guns—great guns planted on yonder hill," pointing, as she spoke, to a lofty height that was opposite to the eminence on which we stood. The story of the castle having been stormed on this side with artillery, sufficiently accounts for its being more battered than in any other part of the building. Some persons have, I know, doubted the fact of the siege during the civil wars; but so many circumstances exist to render it more than probable,

that I entertain no doubt whatever of its truth. Whilst we were viewing the ruins, the child's mother arrived, and expressing a fear that her daughter had not been able to give us such information as might be required, she confirmed the little girl's story about the De Pomeroy in the time of Richard the First, and that concerning the battering of the castle by a cannonade in the days of the great rebellion.

The castle, as I have noticed, was evidently built at different periods, and should it continue a few years longer, the confusion to the tyro antiquary will be greater than it is already; as, for the purpose of strengthening the building, and also for securing it against the inspection of gratuitous visitors, walls with rude embattlements have recently been built from one part of the structure to another, giving it a patchwork appearance, very incompatible with picturesque beauty.

Being desirous of seeing the ruins if possible from below, we inquired if there was any path that would lead us thither. On informing us there was, the good woman put us again under the guidance of the little girl; who now took us to see a large beech-tree, which, she said, was considered to be as old as the castle. The tree is certainly of a very extraordinary size, but by no means of such great antiquity. Its lowest branches were at no mean height, and yet persons must have given themselves some trouble to climb it, as above them we saw several names cut in the bark. A single beech-tree, perhaps, may not produce the effect, but from what I have observed at Mount Edgcumbe, and at Spitchwick, where there are several beeches together, no grass will grow under them; this, I believe, is owing to the fall of the leaves, which have something in them unfavourable to vegetation.

By a winding path through the wood, we descended the hill, at the foot of which runs a little brook: this, collected into a pond, turns a mill, that, no doubt, belonged to the castle; as (after scrambling up the opposite bank, whence we had a somewhat less obstructed view of the ruins), when we reached the summit, we found the mill was built with some share of ancient architectural ornament. Soon after seeing this, we bade adieu to Berry Pomeroy.

I must not here omit mentioning, that on the day after, when we were about half a mile on our road to Tourquay, we once more met our little guide. We were much pleased to see her again, as I had regretted I had not asked her name. This I now did; and the answer was Mary Chaff. Not exactly catching the last word, I asked her to spell her name;

and with all the naïveté of childhood, she began with the beginning, and spelt every letter of Mary Chaff with the utmost deliberation. With a laugh, and an additional present, we then took our leave of her, as she stood making her little courtesies as long as we were in sight.

As we drove on we took a last look at the distant towers of Berry Pomeroy Castle, our minds filled with the recollection of the impressive events there said to have occurred in the romantic age of Richard of the Lion Heart, that most gallant and crusading king.

But these circumstances respecting Sir Henry de Pomeroy are not all that have come down to us. Another and no less striking tradition concerning the same Sir Henry is still preserved in Cornwall, in the neighbourhood of St. Michael's Mount, in which celebrated spot it is said to have occurred. This last mentioned story is noticed, though very slightly, by a few lines in an ancient Chronicler; and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, the truth of both traditions has never been questioned by any biographer or historian of ancient or modern times.

I have only to add that, having already published three works of fiction, and one topographical and historical, connected with the counties of Cornwall and Devon, in the former of which I availed myself of many fragments of tradition, to raise a "superstructure of fiction on a groundwork of truth," I was induced to undertake the present partly by my own wish, and partly from being urged to do so by more than one literary friend, natives of the west, who had repeatedly pointed out to me the traditionary fragments of Henry de Pomeroy, as a most desirable subject for my series of works on the counties of Cornwall and Devon.

One friend, now, alas! no more, of considerable literary taste, so repeatedly urged me "to call up,"—such was the playful phrase,—the monks of Tavistock Abbey, in the days of their power and their pride, that I promised I would endeavour to combine with the subject in question some scenes of ancient times, in the far-famed and favoured Abbey of the Tavy.

For the rest, desirous to please the more serious classes of my readers, I can assure them, I have attempted to blend with the events and characters of imagination, such sketches of the manners and customs of the twelfth century, the period of the narrative, as I trust will be acceptable in an historical point of view: and though to cite ancient authorities, or

modern antiquaries, for every instance of obsolete manners, would be an insufferable piece of pedantry in a romance, yet I feel it due to myself to state that for whatever of this nature will be found in the following pages, it has the sanction of historical and unquestionable authority.

A. E. B.

*The Vicarage, Tavistock,
April 10th, 1841.*

CHAPTER I.

An old, old Monastery,—
Withal it lies, perhaps, a little low,
Because the monks preferred a hill behind,
To shelter their devotion from the wind.
It stood embosomed in a happy valley.

BYRON.

ABOUT the latter part of the twelfth century, the Abbey of Tavistock, of which so few remains now exist to attest its former splendour, was in the very height of its beauty, wealth, and power. A Saxon prince had been its founder; kings had contributed by their munificence to its opulence and its immunities. Barbarians and invaders had burnt and pillaged its sacred cells; but it had risen again, like the fabled phoenix, from its ashes, and with its renovated existence acquired a dignity and strength that soon placed it above every other religious house, save that of Glastonbury, in the west of England.

The Virgin and St. Rumon were the heavenly patrons to whom it was dedicated; and nobles, churchmen, and knights, were alike eager to promote the opulence and grandeur of so celebrated a foundation, nothing doubting that the good of their own souls was secured from being shaken by the enemy, by every stone of the building they helped to pile with so much liberality of spirit.

For learning also, our abbey was in great repute. Almer the Saxon was its first abbot; and Livingus, afterwards bishop of St. Germain, in Cornwall, famous alike for his munificence, his misfortunes, and the high estimation in which he was held by Canute the Great, was in a manner its second founder; and in the abbey he had so benefited, Livingus, at last, laid his bones. There, likewise, did Edwy Atheling seek refuge from the jealousies of the Danish usurper, and dying, was buried near the grave of Orgar, Earl or Heretoge of Devon, his Saxon ancestor, and the illustrious

founder of the house. But to cite the names of all those to whom history has done honour, and who were all more or less connected with the Abbey of Tavistock, would be a task better suited to the professed antiquary, than to such chroniclers as ourselves, who propose, in our narrative, to treat of persons and things of a very different character.

At the time of which we write, many portions of the abbey even now remaining, were not in existence, such being of a more recent period. The monastery was then a noble, solid, but somewhat sombre pile, built in that style of architecture popularly called Saxon. It was characterised by massive towers and walls, not so lofty as they were strong; by deep-set, round-headed windows and doorways, with their short clustered columns and their circular mouldings, carved with the zig-zag and other fanciful ornaments, that swept along the whole span of the arch. These doorways, like all other parts of the building, were too heavy for elegance; but, when viewed in their general outline, there was something simple and imposing in the massiveness of their architecture, that would have been destroyed by any additions of a more refined taste.

Indeed, the Anglo-Saxon or Norman architecture (for one was much the same as the other prior to the Conquest) was a style of building that disdained to rest its claims on the graces of detail, or the elegances of form. It was like one of those hardy barons, of the early times of which we write, who found in a solid bulk and a stout frame of sinews and muscles, with a noble aspect (though calculated to awe rather than to captivate the beholder), a sufficient counterbalance for the want of that more light and graceful figure and appearance, which, by a different education, and a greater refinement of manners, characterised the youth of France and of England also, in the days of less personal hardihood in action.

On the banks of the Tavy (that took its rise in the very heart of Dartmoor, and here made its rapid course over a channel amid picturesque rocks, surrounded by woods in the bosom of a valley, watered by a thousand streams), stood this noble abbey, at once the support, the benefactor, and the glory of the country and the town from which it took its name. Its turreted towers and its strong embattled walls rose within a short space of the river, that in gentle murmurs, or when swollen by rains, in foaming waves, rolled at their feet.

The abbey church reared itself above those walls, and all

other of the monastic buildings, and seemed, in the solemnity of its aspect, to give an air of quiet sanctity to the surrounding scene. These objects, most impressive in themselves, when viewed in combination were altogether calculated to produce that romantic gloom, so replete with poetic feeling, which associates itself so entirely with scenes of seclusion and of holy and contemplative retirement from the world.

Within a small apartment belonging to the offices of this delightfully situated abbey, one summer's day towards the close of the twelfth century, there sat a little party enjoying themselves at noon, when the Lord Abbot, the monks, and some of the novices were taking what was called their *meridian*; that is, their day sleep: a very necessary repose in a house whose duties and offices in the church obliged most of its members to be out of their beds during no inconsiderable portion of the night.

The little party of which we now speak was of a social character, and entertained at the particular invitation of Thomas the cellarer, in his own especial snug cell, conveniently placed where none of the more rigid officers of the household could be in any way annoyed, if now and then any too obstreperous sounds of mirth and jollity, when the wine was in and the wit was out, might proceed from its confines; nor was it so near the inspectors as to be constantly exposed to the eye of any jealous *obedientary* as he was called, or too prying monk, whose turn it might be for the week to keep a watchful look out over the brothers, to see that they lived within the rule of the godly St. Bennet, for Benedictine monks were those of our abbey.

True it is that the cellarer had little cause for fear, as few of the brotherhood were disposed to be at cross-purposes with him, or to look at all too closely after his ways; for never, since the days of Livingus, had this excellent abbey been famed for anything like an observance of too much rule. It was not a house that made holiness a penance. The paths of peace, with somewhat of the plenty that peace is proverbially said to bring along with her, had been very generally held as the pleasantest path to heaven, by almost all the abbots, priors, sub-priors, and monks, vowed to the honour of the Virgin and St. Rumon, in this blessed society.

There was something in the very air of the house that was thriving; for the brothers commonly grew fat upon it, notwithstanding fast-days and vigils were regularly proclaimed by the tolling of the bells, and the calends of the monastery.

The cellarer, however, albeit the Lord Abbot was a very good apothecary, and the Lord Bishop of the diocese, according to the custom of the age, an excellent physician, took much credit to himself, that in Tavistock Abbey there was at all times a lean hospital and a fat kitchen.

This worthy Thomas was looked upon, if not as a father, yet somewhat as a godfather to the whole fraternity; for he stood sponsor for them all in sundry particulars, and promised in their names, that they should eschew all ale that was not up to the true strength of old Saxon huffcap; that roasted swans were nothing too good at the feast of the Virgin in honour of her ascension; and that carp, cooked in choice Malmsey wine, was a dish orthodox for days of fast and mortification; and it may here be stated, that, among many other privileges, the cellarer possessed one calculated to make him exceedingly popular with his brother monks, as they all benefited by it: that of his being authorised to ask for certain indulgences for the whole fraternity—such as that he might be permitted to order the dishes for refection for a certain space of time, just before the precentor was to rehearse, in chapter, what was called the sentence of the rule. This being nothing less than a particular rule of the holy St. Bennet, which enforced a strict observance of the most poor and abstemious diet.

True it is that this golden code of abstinence was at all times hung up and displayed in a most conspicuous part of the house. But in order that it might not hang as useless on the walls of the monastery (as we sometimes see an old hat, coat, or straw figure hang in a bed of peas, to frighten the birds, till, by finding it does them no harm, they become at last so familiar with the scarecrow, that they transgress with boldness, and pilfer all around with the utmost impunity), it was wisely ordained that on certain days, four times in a year, this self-denying rule should be first read aloud, and afterwards enforced, except when the cellarer had previously asked an indulgence for the brothers. No wonder, therefore, an official who had the exercise of such a privilege as this within his own power, should be one towards whom most men looked with an eye of favour within the abbey walls; and, indeed, on all occasions, the eatables and drinkables were so much under his control, that, like Doctor Pedro Rezio Turte Defuero, with the luckless governor, Sancho Panza, his wand or word could give wings to the dishes, however excellent, and lay them under interdict to all but the very heads of the house.

So influential a man as the cellarer was not without state. He had his court days, a sort of "petty sessions of his own;" when swans, geese, turkeys, and most other feathered fowl, were brought before him, alive or dead, for account; and butts of ale, cider, and wine, were laid in store by this provident official; whilst the kitchener looked after the less aristocratic viands of bullocks, sheep, goats, and lambs. Indeed, so many and so various were the duties, privileges, and profits of this worthy, that we should weary our readers did we recite them at large. We shall, therefore, but add, that at this monastery he held also his court of thieves and robbers, and sometimes gave sentence on two-legged animals not quite so harmless as ducks and geese; he had, likewise, power over the highways on the abbey lands, so that not a stick or stone could be removed without his consent. Though last, not least of his prerogatives, he was the man to whom the porter of the abbey gates was obliged to send the keys, after locking up for the night, when no one could enter or pass without the walls unless by his most especial favour; whilst his authority was absolute over all such as transgressed the rules, by being absent after complin, the last evening service in the church.

The cellarer's personal distinctions were many. He had his two palfreys; his servant, in the livery of the house; and in addition to his comfortable monk's frock, he was allowed a good robe of clerk's cloth, with its hood of lamb's fur, to keep him warm and dry whenever he rode forth in foul weather for the service of the brotherhood, in whose welfare he took so lively an interest in all the seasons of game and venison throughout the whole year.

Brother Thomas was one of those who followed literally the injunction of the apostle; for when merry—and the note of his cheerful spirits, like the crow of chanticleer, began at morning's dawn—he always sang psalms. He was jolly and rubicund; had a full cheek, a sleek skin, a laughing eye, a nose like a peony in full blow, and a shaven crown that was round and bright as a new tennis-ball. His voice was full and sounding; and so nice was his ear, that, like Master Nicholas, the clerk, in Chaucer's Tale, he made the gayest melody on the giterne, the ribible, or the saultrie, and

"So sweetly, that all the chamber rong,
And Angelus ad virginem he song,
And often blessed was his merry throat."

Such was our cellarer. With him sat the sacrist; church bells, banners, and tapers, were under his control; and the

lantern, which it was his duty to carry before the priest, after he had deposited the text upon the altar, in his way to the lecture, now lay at his feet ready for the hour of service; a sure note that he did not intend to budge from his present seat till the vespers might require his attendance in the church.

The sacrist was a little, thin, grave-looking man; one that a sinner might mistake for a saint, though he was no hypocrite. But for all his grave appearance, he liked a jest in a quiet way, and was fond of a dry humour rather than a dry cup. He was considered to be wise; but he held there was no wisdom like that which arises from counsel; consequently, whenever he had any matter that he deemed to be of import to take in hand, he never ventured upon it till such time as he had considered the affair with his especial chum, Thomas the cellarer, over a flagon of Rhenish wine.

With these pious monks—who might both be said to hold office in the monastery, which, like most ministers in office, they had no desire to resign—sat a somewhat singular companion for men so holy, and within their own walls. This was a certain individual known all the country round, and a very great man in his own estimation, being no less a person than Patch, for such was his name, domestic fool of my Lady Alicia de Beaumont, of Wilsworthy Castle, an edifice situated in the adjoining parish, and very nigh Dartmoor.

Patch was in the fool's attire common to his day, and we have seen in our travels (for we wish our readers to understand that we have travelled, and, therefore, have seen many "strange things"), an old and curious picture of the Middle Ages, in the Museum at Antwerp, which so exactly represents our Patch, that we are much disposed to think he must have been the original of the portrait. It represents the clown in full dress; his nether socks (long pantaloons) being *mi parti*, that is, different in colour, the right leg scarlet, the left blue; wooden shoes, like clogs, are on his feet; he wears a tight jerkin guarded with red and blue; whilst his cap, the gayest part of his costume, is adorned with a red cock's comb at the crown, long ears, like those of an ass, at the sides, and a long pendant point on which jangles a row of bells.

In the days of Patch, a bauble surmounted by an ass's head and a pair of bagpipes, on which one of his trade often played, were likewise the especial appointments of the fool; but at the moment we introduce him to our readers, Patch had neither bauble nor bagpipe in his hands, but a cup of

good red wine, which he very much preferred to any symbol of his office, or any other distinction.

Patch was a little fellow; and though at the time of which we write there was a certain degree of knavery and even of malice, which under the mask of folly often did much mischief, attached to the character of the fool, yet we must in truth say there was no natural malice in the composition of Patch; and as his noble mistress had never allowed him to be hunted and teased by the pages and the boys, nor to be worried in any way, so as to excite or call forth any evil dispositions, he was a very harmless creature, a mere fool for sport and amusement, such as was kept in every palace or castle of prince, bishop, baron, knight, or, in short, of any persons of rank of the period.

Patch, as we have said, was a little fellow, slight and active, with a handsome leg and foot, of which he was so proud, that his socks and his shoes were ever of the newest and the best; and he had fallen into the habit of walking with his toes turned out in a manner bordering on the ludicrous, from the great desire he felt that these distinctions of his person should attract observation. His head was small, and covered with curly black hair; his nose was not set straight on his face; all the features of which were irregular, and so flexible, that he had the power of contorting them into the most hideous and ludicrous grimaces; even into that of giving a sort of caricature representation of sundry animals, whose sounds and voices he could imitate with wonderful truth and ease.

Patch had bright, black, fiery eyes, and a pair of shaggy eyebrows not unworthy the glances that shot from the orbs beneath them, to which they gave both character and additional effect. His forehead, according to the system of Spurzheim and Gall, would have been held as indicative of small space for the brains, as it receded very much, like the forehead of the dog. Truth to tell, an over portion of sound judgment was not the characteristic of Patch's mind under any circumstances.

His great merit rested in his talents as a grimacier and imitator. He could grin like one of the carved Gothic heads on the oak stalls in the church; lengthen his visage when he would indicate the physiognomy of an ass, bringing forward the long ears of his fool's cap to assist the portraiture; and would give out the bray of that animal in startling perfection, whenever he found himself in a company where he thought sympathy was particularly due to the qualities of such a crea-

ture. Like Daniel Dove, the cock, with his "embattled comb," would respond to his crowing; the very hens would run about the poultry-yard and flap and agitate their wings as he clucked to them, as if in search of their chickens; or as if they fancied that a sister hen had laid an egg, when all the Dame Partletts deem themselves bound to celebrate it with cackling. And like Daniel, even the solemnity of the owl, with its half-closed sleepy eye, and its ominous hooting too-whoo, were not beyond the powers of Patch in imitation—powers that made him the delight of children, who would stare with all their eyes, laugh, shriek, run to him, lean their heads on his lap, or stand in silent wonder, as he went through his exhibition. And such was his perfection in imitating the cats, that, like the luckless Diego in *Gil Blas* (who made those caterwaulings the signal of his meetings with Dame Margelina, the old Doctor's wife), he once got his head broken by a stone pelted at him in mistake for a real grimalkin. When, in addition to these accomplishments, it is told that Patch had the most ready caper at a morris-dance, could play on the handbells, was master of a thousand antics, and could sing at counter-point (a method of singing something like our glee), his value will be more readily understood in a family such as the Lady Alicia's, at a time when few but the clergy could read, and when domestic occupations, to wile away the hours of an easy life and a rainy day, were of the fewest and most confined description.

The natural disposition of Patch was that of extreme good-nature. He would do anything, run anywhere, to serve anybody, who gave him but a goodnatured word; and as he had a sort of idle curiosity, that prompted him to learn all the news he could collect, he was ever on the alert, a professed gossip, and knew every woman, old or young, famed for chattering, within the compass of his walks, and those were only limited by the strength of his legs in his wanderings from home.

Now the cellarer being a great lover of news also, but from his official character not being able to collect it quite so readily as one whose professed folly caused no questions he asked to be deemed impertinent, was not at all sorry to extract from Patch, at the very cheap rate of a cup of wine, all the intelligence he could gather, respecting divers noble persons and families in the neighbourhood. These morsels of news were not simply as choice scraps for his own entertainment; for the Lord Abbot was not inapt to collect from the cellarer as the

cellarer did from Patch, the gossip of the country, though from a very different motive. By means, therefore, of that ingenious art of cooking news, so practised and perfected in this small town, even in its days of Saxon celebrity, there was nothing easier than by adding here, and twisting and turning there, and putting in a few grains of scandal and the sauce of a little malice, to serve as dainty a dish of news for the table of my Lord Abbot, as could possibly be desired on any occasion of wonderment, idleness, or envy, in a country town, where there were so many little minds to be gratified by little means. Yet we do not wish to imply that Brother Thomas thus gathered his intelligence for any especial purpose of mischief; for we can safely aver he was a very friendly man over a cup of wine,—that he was singularly good-humoured when he was pleased; and so far was he from doing wrong by premeditation, that he never even suspected he could do wrong at all.

With this object in view, the cellarer now sat with his two friends round a little table, on which stood no insignificant portion of a delicate roasted swan; flanked by a loaf of monks' bread, and some manchets of the best simnel. Of choice liquors there were abundance; from portly huff-cap, malmsey, and metheglin, down to simple cowslip wine; for the cellarer, having absolute rule over these matters, kept a little buffet well stored at hand, the contents being selected from the treasures of his own especial crypt; and if any objections were made to a provision so tempting to solitary indulgence, the plea of "only by way of sample," or "just to taste what might be best suited to the palate of my Lord Abbot and his guests," were answers prompt and never questioned.

One other individual helped to complete the party; a hound, a favourite of the abbot, when he made up a company to go to his hunting-seat at Morwell-house; and never till of late had the dog been left behind on any such occasions of joyous sport. He now lay stretched at the cellarer's feet. Some allusion had been made to him in conversation.

"And pray," said Patch, as he put down the flagon, from which he had taken no small draught, "what ails Woden there?" pointing to the hound, for the names of the ancient Saxon deities were often given at this period, as a mark of contempt, by the Normans, to their dogs. "Woden hath become something like me of late, more to be found in the house than in the field; looking after the porridge, and letting go free the hares. Woden hath truly the wisdom of years growing upon him, as well as some of its grey hairs! he likes

best the fireside and a soft cushion; wherefore is it that he goes not forth to the field?"

"His scent fails him," replied the Cellarer; "and my Lord Abbot likes not a hound at fault."

"Blow vinegar in his nose," said the Fool; "'tis a sovereign remedy to restore his scent to a hound, or to call up a lethargic man. And do you, Sir Cellarer, in your wisdom construe me this. Wherefore is our King Richard, he of the lion's heart, like the hound with a vinegared nose?"

The cellarer studied a minute; looked up at the ceiling and down on the floor, then at the grinning and self-satisfied proponent of the question, whose very air seemed to say that his meaning, though pregnant, lay too deep for a common wit. Then the cellarer rubbed his hand over his shaven crown, and finally repeated the question, weighing every word of it with the slowest delivery, and at last looked just as wise as he did before.

"Thou canst not hit it," said Patch. "Do thou try thy wits, Master Sacrist. Wherefore is the hound with the vinegared nose, like our King Richard?"

"Why, may be," replied the Sacrist, "it may have been as startling to his highness, as vinegar to a hound's nose, to find himself on a sudden prisoner to the Duke of Austria, when he looked to return to his good land of England; for such things are apt to startle a man mightily, even as do our bells the new comers, when I give an unexpected pull at the ropes; therefore I conceive——"

"Anything but that which comes nigh the matter," said the Fool; "thou hast ever but one thing at work in thy brains, to beat on thy wits, like the clapper of thy own bells. Do what thou wilt, all with thee is a bell, Master Sacrist. If thou walkest, thy arms swing upwards, as if they were ringing the lauds; thy discourse is ever to the same tune,—it is but as so many changes on bell-ringing. Thou hast the very sound of the matins in thy talk, and when thou takest thy turn to lecture in the pulpit to the brothers, the curfew itself sounds not a more drowsy chime to the ear of a borrel churl after a day's labour; and they are all soon fast asleep."

The sacrist frowned on Patch, but a fool's vein is not easily checked; so on he went: "I tell thee, man, thy very life is but an epitome of thy calling. It needs one of thy own ropes to draw thee to any good work. And thy conscience is not to be awakened unless it be by an alarum, like thy own bells at a fire. Thou livest by a rope, and may be thou wilt die by a rope; seeing thy abbey hath the right of pit and gallows."

"And of the stocks and rod, for the legs and backs of fools who prate too freely with their betters," said the Sacristan, angrily; for, even from one licensed in his folly, he liked not too much freedom. But the cellarer, wishing for no brawls between friends, filled out another cup, and proposed that they should all drink a speedy deliverance to King Richard, and hoped that Patch would expound his riddle, as well as pledge the royal health.

"Well, then, here 'tis," said Patch. "The royal Richard hath borrowed from my trade of late, and hath played the fool, at no man's bidding but his own. He hath left his kingdom to go after foreign wars, and now that is like to leave him; even like a hen in the mouth of a fox, that is on the start to run away with her, and when good man the master would run after her, he finds the door locked upon him, and Reynard safe with his fowl. Even so, then, like to a once brave hound that hath lost his scent for the game, did our gallant king, whilst following after Saladin abroad, lose all scent of the treason that was going on at home, till, like vinegar in the nose, his brother John's treachery, being suddenly brought to his knowledge, waked him up with its stinging; and then would he return to look after his affairs in England fast enough, but may be too late, for the Duke of Austria lay in the way, and our fighting king was made a prisoner. Now do you take mine enigma, and is it not an ingenious one? even like those of Sir Æsop, that Cædmon, the Saxon boy, tells of as a yule tale, round the red hearth and the blazing logs."

"Tis far-fetched," said the Sacristan; "thy wits are muddy."

"Not so is thy ale," replied Patch; "and I will even crush another cup with thee for fellowship, for my legs are weary, and the spirit that sustains them somewhat faint; it needeth cheering."

"Hast thou been far to-day?" inquired the Cellarer; "at what taverners hast thou been news gathering; anything stirring? anything worth the carrying?"

"Ay, marry is there," said Patch, "more than my head could bear; a burthen of news that would weary a sumpter mule, though used to carry the wallet of a pardoner and his bags of relics from the Holy Land on sale, his 'pigs' bones' converted into those of the thumbs and toes of saints."

"Peace, fool, peace," exclaimed the Cellarer; "no jesting with sacred things, and within the walls, too, of this holy house. Holy St. Bennet! it were as much as my office were worth

and all its havings, were it known that I suffered a fool's prate on such matters within my cell. Down on thy knees, on the instant, and I will give thee absolution; ask it on the instant, and then we may go on with our discourse," continued the Cellarer, following that rule of the house which enjoined immediate pardon being asked and absolution given for all offences in conversation and sins of a lighter kind. Patch obeyed. "And now for thy news," said Brother Thomas.

"Here it is then," replied Patch. "The Queen-mother, the royal Eleanor, is come over, with a power from Wales, in support of the rights of her imprisoned son King Richard. I had the news this morning, as I called in at the Lord de St. Loe's buttry hatch; and there is more news still."

"What is it?" inquired the Cellarer, eagerly.

"Why, 'tis thought," continued Patch, after a pause, "that widows will rise in price, and maidens become cheaper, by reason of the ransom of King Richard."

"How, fool, how?" said the Cellarer.

"I will tell you anon," answered Patch; "and I had it from a clerk of good account, one who can both read and write, and hath a turn for gramery; he, therefore, knoweth the truth of things. The king's ransom is stated at the value of his highness's valour, not at that of his people's means; so besides lands to be yielded up in France and elsewhere, there are more pounds to be paid in money—payment in tale—than I can reckon up by memory, though I can count with any man by the fingers."

"The religious houses are, questionless, not to be taxed for the king's ransom," said the Sacristan; "they will pray for his majesty's speedy release."

"They must do something more than that for it," said Patch, "for the limbo of the Duke of Austria is not like purgatory, —there is no praying a soul out of it. Like the gates of our blessed St. Peter, the duke opens not those of his cage to let slip the royal bird of England, without the Peter-pence being paid. It is noised abroad that every one above the degree of a socman is to pay a fourth part of his revenue for the year towards the ransom, ay, and as much of his moveable goods or their value; and every knight the sum of twenty shillings; and now comes the cream of the matter and of my discourse—the fee for marrying a widow, who is under crown custody, is to be equal to that of marrying a maid under the same: till this thing happened, to raise the ransom of a king, the fee for marrying a widow was but half as much. And then the abbeyes, it is said, are to give the value of a year's wool."

"Only those of the orders of Cisteaux and of Sempringham," said the Cellarer; "they were ever forward in putting forth claims for privileges to King Richard, and now will they find the truth of the proverb—'Many go for wool and come home shorne.' The blessed brothers of St. Benedict will, I trust, get off more easily. It is not good to tax those who are the fountains of learning in the land. England were barbarous still, like those wolves, the hordes of the north, but for the Benedictines. Learning hath its labours, and ought to have its immunities; for we, who spend our days in abstinence and study, and in fasts, and our nights in prayer——"

"Pray, brother," said Patch, "when are the feast days of this house? for, seeing that thy fasts are so very tolerable, I would gladly partake of them. I never here taste worse fare than thy simnel or wheaten bread, though at home I have often the brown loaf. Thou must have an honest miller, or a miller's daughter, that favours thee from the choicest sack."

"Holy Mary! there she stands," said the Cellarer, and he pointed, as he spoke, to a laughing face, like that of a young Hebe, peeping in through a small open window, which looked towards a very convenient low door in the abbey walls, that opened on the banks of the river near the mills.

CHAPTER II.

Ful brighter was the shining of hire hewe
 Than in the towr the noble yforged newe
 But of hire song, it was as loud and yerne,
 As any swallow sitting on a berne.
 Thereto she coude skip, and make a game,
 As any kid or calf following his dame.
 Hire mouth was swete as braket or the meth,
 Or horde of apples, laid in hay or heth;
 Winsing she was, as is a jolly colt,
 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.

CHAUCER.

THE little window, at which appeared the plump, round, and rosy face of Grace Bolt, the miller's daughter, was one whose services were more than of a twofold nature. Most glazed apertures in walls and houses, civil or ecclesiastic, are considered as merely useful for the very simple purposes of admitting air and light. But the window in the cell of our cellarer, if fame did him no injustice, was used, and not unfrequently, for things of a very different and far more substantial nature; for nothing less than admitting goods, living or otherwise, that were very generally held as contraband to the monks. A friend, or a boon companion, was sometimes smuggled in; or a dainty in Lent; or report had gone so far as to say, now and then a damsel. In short, anything that could not pass the watch and ward of the porter's gates undetected.

Grace Bolt was a blithe merry maiden, wild as a Dartmoor colt, and pure as the flour that had been thrice sifted at her father's mills. She was a pet with the cellarer, in a harmless way. He was, as we have before intimated, a goodnatured man, a dear lover of gossip, and had so much of the milk of human kindness in his disposition, that he entertained a tenderness for the female sex at large,—that delighted to expand itself in acts of kindness to pretty children, were they little girls of eight, or blooming ones of eighteen years old. Nor was he less goodnatured towards their mothers, or even their grandmothers, provided the latter would give him a seat in the

chimney nook, and a cup of spiced wine, to season a gossip, and did not require of him too often the kiss of peace.

The very cockles of the cellarer's heart were moved by a sense of the purest joy, at seeing a happy, frank, youthful face, shining and sparkling, mouth, eyes, and cheeks, with the joyance of a gay spirit; even, as he would say, the weir of the Tavy sparkled in the sunshine. And then he liked to keep a fine peach, or a choice store of apples, to give one to Grace, and to see her eat it, shewing her white teeth, and looking roguish, as he chuckled her under the chin. And sometimes, in graver moments, as she enjoyed this dainty of the orchard, the cellarer, good man, would sermonize a little, making his subject, like the great French divines, apply to the circumstances before him. In such moments, he would point out to her the danger of eating forbidden fruit (always accompanying the lecture with an injunction never to trespass on my Lord Abbot's garden), and the fatal consequences of curiosity to the mother of mankind. In illustration of which, our worthy brother would remind her there was a beauteous piece of carving in oak to be seen about the altar of St. Mary Magdalen, in the abbey church, where all the Gothic devils were represented as pampering and making much of the serpent, their great master, when going forth in this reptile guise on the deadly work of temptation.

Grace Bolt received these tokens of the cellarer's regard with all the gratitude they deserved, and she really felt for the worthy man something of that duty and affection which a good child feels for an indulgent parent. She often, therefore, took occasion to slip in at the postern door in the wall, *that* being the nearest way for bringing in the bags of flour, and followed the sacks even as she was wont to do when she was a "tottering little girl" of but four or five years old; and she had grown up so gradually under the eye of the monks, that even the severest among them almost forgot she was now a woman, and none were shocked at a sight so familiar to them as the rosy cheeks and smiling lips of Grace, if any one of the brothers chanced to meet her near the little window we have named. As for going beyond it, or trespassing on the abbot's private grounds, it was a thing quite out of the question, though we will not say but that Grace had a curious eye to them. She would have liked much to ramble amongst their long alleys of sycamore, and their beautiful terraces, and to see the carp play, or come and be caught, in any one of the three stew ponds that were within these precincts of the domain. Grace

had in her own person all those points of character in which a good-natured man most delights. There was, therefore, sympathy between herself and the cellarer; and, moreover, the additional tie of doing kindnesses, where the one party is willing and the other grateful; there are few stronger bonds. Grace in her form had more of the partridge than the weasel; she was plump, tall, and active, had a neat ankle and well-turned arm, locks of curly brown, and a pair of dark eyes that shone like bugles or jet. She could not frown, for the perpetual smile on her lips would not let her; the laughing eyes, indeed, forbade even the attempt at putting on an angry look; if teased, she could only, like other good-humoured but petted children, shake her tiny hand, stamp with her little foot, and say a pouting word or two that did but make her look the more pretty; so that it became a real pleasure to vex her a little sometimes in order to forgive her, or to soothe her into a return of her sportiveness and mirth; even as fond mothers delight in those rainbow smiles in their infants that dimple their soft cheeks whilst the tears yet hang upon them.

Grace also was a damsel of taste; indeed she rather dressed beyond her degree, notwithstanding it was a high offence in a vassal to do so. But Grace was a church vassal, and she had found the most indulgent rule from her masters the monks. The sub-prior himself had more than once given her a word out of Solomon, about the humble attire of women, and had cited the pillows of the Jewish daughters at their arms, as awful warnings against finery. On all these occasions, the modest way in which Grace took the rebukes of her vanity (a fault however which she did not reform), disarmed wrath, so that the sub-prior was obliged to content himself with having given the warning, and with the recollection that the daughters of Tyre were celebrated for their vain love of dress; and that the Lady of Babylon (understanding literally the figurative language of prophecy, and, therefore, fancying the image of an idolatrous worship to be that of a living queen), was to come down at last, and to sit in the dust, notwithstanding her pride.

Grace's taste in dress was more for variety than uniformity. She had, perhaps, an eye to a nosegay, where blues, greens, and reds, are gaily mixed together; and certainly a tailor, or master fashioner, might have culled a pattern-book from the many samples of bright colours she wore on her back. Her dress is so great a curiosity in these days, that we must say a word about it.

She wore a stammel petticoat of orchard green; a pair of new scarlet hose of sey, and half socks of Cordovan leather. Her girdle was of Coventry blue; her bodice of ginger-coloured cendal, furred with lamb's skin; cherry-coloured knots and laces fastened her kirtle in the front, and tied up her sleeves; and her fillet round the head was of nun's white, surmounted by a volupure, or veil, of Paris facture.

The cellarer, on seeing Grace's pretty face peeping in at the window, insisted she should come in and take some fruit. There was a fine dish of ripe cherries standing on the table, flanked by one of pippins. She had been accustomed to partake of such good things ever since she used to be handed in, like a kitten, or a puppy, though the window, when a child. True it is Grace had outgrown the possibility of making such entries and exits; but as, according to the vulgar saying among the Turks (then commonly known in England by means of the Crusaders), "if Mahomet's coffin won't come to us, we must go to Mahomet;" even so, if Grace Bolt could no longer get in through the window, the window had been accommodated to get her in; for, by some strange fancy or other, the cellarer, long before we opened this history, had caused it to be more widened in its dimensions, than a strict adherence to the architecture of the period would admit in a building of such pretensions.

Through this window Grace was now, therefore, invited to come in; and as she had for years been as friendly and familiar with the good cellarer as with her father's great dog Trenchard; was a rustic in education, and though perfectly modest, knew none of the refinements in manners even of her own day, she made, as she said, no bones about it, but accepted at once the invitation; took the helping hand that brother Thomas offered to her, gave a spring, like a fawn at its gambols under the greenwood tree, and scrambled in at the window without any difficulty; sat down immediately at the table, and sipped the cup of cowslip wine that was handed to her, in a modest way. Indeed she quaffed it as delicately as Chaucer's prioress herself might have done; for so nice were her lips, she left not even a stain upon the cup that had been pressed to them.

"And where is thy father gone to-day, wench?" said the Cellarer; "I saw him not with the villains who brought up the sacks of corn."

"Father is gone," answered Grace, "to seek the Lady Alicia, and to beg my lady to be so good as to give order that the new

millers, who has set up at Cudlipp town, may keep to his own bounds, and not slock away our folk to take their grist to his mill."

"The common sin and complaint of millers throughout the land," said the Sacrist, "they cannot keep bounds."

"And what makes thee in that holiday guise, my lass?" said the Cellarer; "this is not fair day!"

"No," replied Grace; "but there's talk of the great folk coming from Exeter; and all the town will be out to-day; and so there's to be a morris, and a jongleur, and a turgator, come all the way from over seas; and he has seen Saladin with his own eyes; and has heard the speaking stone at Jerusalem; and seen a man that tried to do it, but who could not drown himself in the Dead Sea. And he saw also the hermit of Lebanon, the pious hermit that, at the prayers of the nuns of St. Jean d'Acre, got up and put his own head on again, after the Saracens had cut it off! And besides all these, there's to be a wonderful doctor; a pilgrim that cures all diseases by miracle, and——"

"I see," said the Fool, "you are, my most pretty Finestra, making yourself gay as the popinjay to go and see how many of my trade can be made by listening to one travelling minstrel who returns from the Holy Land. Thou wilt have to pay coin for this. Marry, wench, it will cost thee at least an esterling; for quartered money passes not current with your minstrel. Now, for my part, give me but a silver sixpence, and I will entertain the whole town for it, Holy Land fashion, and never be at fault for lack of a story, but rather for breath."

"La!" said Grace, "what mean you by that, Master Patch?"

"Why, look you," replied Patch, "get me an old pilgrim's gown that hath gaping wounds in it, one only fit for the lazar; where all the tattered, the ragged, and the cuffed, go to be healed after the holy wars; stick me a cockleshell here in my bonnet—there is much in your cockleshell; give me scrip and staff with an old palm branch, stolen out of church after Palm Sunday;—and see if I make not as reverend a palmer, and as good a 'potecary, as ever came home to cure folk by miracle from the East: for I know how to tell lies and to ask alms for the sake of the holy places I have visited, as well as the best among them."

"You!—you would never pass for a palmer," said Grace; "your very bells would betray you."

"My bells betray me!" said the Fool, "they shall be my

warrant. Know ye not, daughter of a flour sack, that the Moslem is forbidden bells by his religion? I will therefore swear that I hung mine in my cap to spite the infidels, and thus will I turn my very folly into wisdom."

"How, fool, how?" said the Sacrist.

"Why, thus," answered Patch; "know ye not that all men run on one of my errands nowadays to the Holy Land? All go to it as fools, but many come from it as knaves. May the blessing of St. Thomas-à-Becket rest on the king's head, though his father had little comfort from his saintship whilst he lived. What hath our Richard gotten, think you, by his journey to Syria? Truly, trouble at home and a prison abroad. What errand hath his turned out to be but one fit for a fool? My cap and bells to him; his highness may claim them as crown dues. And then to see the fools that are made at home by these praying palmers, who traffic in physic from the East! I would work healing miracles as well as they at any pinch for a groat."

"La! Master Patch," said Grace, "you could never get the trick of it."

"Never get the trick of it!" repeated Patch, "only get me the old palmer's gown, and see how I will do it. My long face shall be my wisdom. I will get me a mummer's beard for reverence; a blear eye shall pass for the redness of weeping for my sins. If I meet one who may need me, I will be in a hurry, and that shall give me the air of much occupation. Then, if my lady tells me she is very sick, I will say that I apprehended as much the last time I saw her. If she asks how long her distemper may continue, I will tell her it will depend much on what she can afford to expend on a holy palmer's prayers. And whensoever a question is put to me that I cannot answer, I will shake my head, and that shall reply to all interrogatories."

"But what if the sick you attend should die," said the Sacrist, "how then would you come off?"

"Why, the man's sins are stronger than my prayers for his cure," said Patch; "and his heirs will rest satisfied with such a reason, and will never question further. Nor will they grudge the fee to the leech, so he keep not the sick long in his pains; more especially if his testament be made to their minds. To increase the calls on my attendance, my discourse shall ever be of princes, noble ladies, barons, and portly abbots, who have all been healed by my miracle-working art."

"You have never attempted to doctor your mistress, I will

warrant," said the Sacrist; "yet, if report speaks truth, she needs the mediciner."

"Why, look you," said Patch, "the point is a nice one; and may be, Master Sacrist, there are disorders which palmers dare not meddle with, which the leech cannot cure, and which are only fit to be dealt with by men of frock and cowl, when perhaps in confession; but I say nothing, for what saith Solomon, a 'prating fool shall fall.'" Patch nodded, winked, looked wise, and held his tongue, with that peculiar air which persons affect when they would intimate that they could tell a great deal more, well worth knowing, did they choose to tell it.

This was the very thing to excite the curiosity of the cellarer; and, determined to come to the bottom of the mystery, he forthwith plied Patch with all manner of civil and cajoling speeches; produced from his secret store the choicest flask of a foreign wine; noticed the fool's pleasant way of relating a tale; praised his voice, which though tolerable in the bass of a counterpoint, was singularly harsh and disagreeable in a solo; till, like the fox and the crow in the fable, he set Patch a-singing. But as the words of a catch were not those of the dainty morsel to satisfy curiosity that our good cellarer hungered to have dropped from the flattered lips of the fool, he gently reminded Patch that such harmonies might become audible where it was not at all desirable they should be heard, in the cells of the brothers; and after filling up another cup, seasoning it with a little more compliment, Patch's vanity in becoming the person in company to whom all the rest paid the deference of listening, got the better of the little judgment he could boast, and he became as eager to talk as he had before been shy of entering on the matter. The cellarer drew his stool closer to the speaker, not to lose a word of his discourse. The sacrist listened carelessly, but still he listened; and Grace Bolt stared with all her eyes as Patch began with the very startling question—

"Did you never hear that by some men my lady is thought to be possessed?"

"La!" said Grace, "what is that?"

"Possessed? Holy Mary!" exclaimed the Cellarer, "how can that be, when Father Hilary hath the keeping of her soul."

"Say not of her soul, but of her conscience," said Patch; "and that the devil will trouble, in spite of all the holy man's care, or I know not a hawk from a kestrel. But no matter for

that," he added, putting his finger to his nose. "Possessed some folk say she is, sure enough."

"She should be brought bound to the high altar of our church then, as they bring delirious people to be exorcised," said the Sacrist; "and I ought to have my ringing and my candle-fees for the same; it were a defrauding of the church else, and a neglecting a poor suffering soul."

"She ought not only to be exorcised, but to have the evil spirit taken out of her by the prayers of the monks," said the Cellarer.

"She should make a waxen heart, and offer it with six candles to the blessed image of Our Lady," said Grace Bolt.

"She should send a written schedule of whatever sins lay heaviest upon her mind, to have it hid under the altar-cloth of St. Rumon on Ash Wednesday," said the Sacrist; "when, after sin-dole paid, she would find not a sin left on the scroll; the parchment would come out from the altar as fair as her own conscience."

"Not so fast, holy men," said Patch; "why now you run before the doctor, for he neither lets blood nor drenches before he handles the pulse, and learns what may be the disease of the patient. But you ply your remedies as the Duke of Austria and the Emperor of Germany do their demands for our king's ransom, the one on the back of the other, and each with an eye to himself. You have not heard how my lady is possessed, and yet you slip in a way in a mighty hurry for her cure. I said she was possessed, but I said not with a devil."

"But you said the devil troubled her."

"Ay, that may be," said Patch, "but not possessed her. Why, I tell you, Sir Priest, she is possessed by the witch melancholy; and there is no worse spirit, at least, to my thinking."

"Melancholy!" exclaimed the Cellarer, "and she the mistress of Wilsworthy Castle, and of as goodly an estate as any Norman baron, the forfeiture of one of our greatest Saxon thanes, who was amerced by Henry, the late king, and had his castle stormed and his head broken by this noble lady's husband, whose estate, with all its immunities, dependencies, —its serfs, vassals, and villeins, sack and sock, and toll and team, are even now her own; —all this, and she melancholy! I will never believe it. There never was woman so widowed, and so endowed, that held her grief past the term of her weeds."

"Nay, for matter of that, I don't say that she mourns for her widowhood, nor yet that she pines for a husband," said

Patch; "seeing that no man thrives who woos her, though she has had as many suitors as Queen Penelope, that are seen coming up with relics in their hands, with crosses carried before them, as our damsels worked the story in the tapestry for the chapel of our castle."

"Then your damsels made into good Catholics a set of Pagan heathens," said the Sacrist, who had some smattering of learning. "I know the fashion of that tale. You see, Sir Ulysses was a knight, and his wife was a Lady Penelope."

But the cellarer being much more disposed to hear Patch's account of the Lady Alicia, stopped short his brother monk, and the fool proceeded.

"For many years past, my Lady Alicia de Beaumont hath led a strange kind of life, though being but newly returned to this neighbourhood, 'tis not much known here. There are times and seasons when there is no knowing in what mood to take her; for sometimes she is high and proud, and will admit no approach to her person. At others, she is altogether gentle and sad, and will talk of St. Dunstan's dove, and wish that it might come and settle in her bosom, as it did on that saint's head, who is said to have broke nobody's ever after; and then her mood will change, and she will look wild, and ask who it is that is come to the castle gates, or did we meet no stranger, when, perhaps, nobody has crossed the threshold but a begging palmer, or the house steward and his lads."

"May be," said Grace, "she has seen something."

"Seen something!" replied Patch, "I will warrant me she has; and seen something few of us would like to see—a great deal of trouble, sorrow, and change, and very few quiet nights, and as few quiet days. For some folk do say that her husband, the late Lord de Wilsworthy and de Beaumont——"

"Was what?" cried the Cellarer; "what do some men say of him?"

"I will not tell you," said Patch, reconsidering the matter; "it is enough for me tell what I know, and not to repeat the talk of other folk. Fool I may be, but not fool enough to put my spoon into scalding porridge, and commend it to my own lips: no, no, say what you yourself know, and no harm done; but talk of other people's tellings, and you may quickly find the cudgel on your own back that should be bestowed on that of another."

"And what hast thou known, Master Patch?" said the Cellarer; "do tell us. Talking is dry work, take another cup; you shall not drink beyond the first knob; for though we are

of Norman blood, in our cups we hold Saxon measure.* We hold it to be a wise rule thus, as it were, to place watermarks to our pledges of good-fellowship; shewing how much may suffice a man for necessity, how much for conviviality, and how much after labour; and in this we disdain not to follow the custom of the Saxon churls."

"And yet thy watermarks, holy father, as thou callest them," said Patch, "I will venture to say, were never yet consulted for a less flowing tide than that of the good red wine. In them hath been laid to rest within this abbey, even as in the Red Sea, many an evil spirit, and none that I would more willingly drown than the fiend Melancholy, of whom we talked but now. And if thy watermarks be thus cheerly, thy landmarks, I trust, are no less generous. How account you of them, Master Cellarer?"

"A quarter of a yard of beef for every man at breakfast, save on fast and fish days, and all in proportion. But to thy tale, good fellow, thy tale. In truth is the cup the greatest of all ramblers, for it makes both the tongue and the brains to wander far and wide. You were but now at Wilsworthy Castle, and the subject your lady——"

"Here's a health to her," said Patch. "You must know, then, that our Lady Alicia will sometimes do very strange things: she will absent herself for days together from her household, and nobody knows whither she goes; some say on penances, so secret and so severe that no mortal eye must look on them. Others say she has a vow, and not a few that she has a familiar; but that I will never believe, for nobody keeps a spirit for their own torment, though often to torment others; and whatever spirit our Lady Alicia may consult, it is one that never brings a smile on her own face, as I can witness. She was bad enough in Normandy, but worse since she has returned to merry England."

"She should get her a good husband, a blithe bachelor, some knight of renown, or lord of high degree, or even squire of low degree. To live alone is never well for maid or widow, unless she be vowed as a spouse of holy church," said the Cellarer, crossing himself.

"It cannot be that which grieves her," replied Patch; "for the sovereign king having the right of wardship, by the laws of the Norman William, over all widows of rank, as well as noble orphans, with the power to make their marriages, and

* The Saxons had knobs fixed within their cups for measurement, answering to our quarts, pints, half-pints, etc.

to compel them to wedlock within a certain time, our Lady Alicia, not liking to be so compelled, paid no less a sum than a thousand pounds, tower weight, to Henry, our late king, that she might not be forced to marry till such time as it might please her own fancy to do so."

"And did the king grant her suit?"

"Ay, that he did," said Patch; "and nothing loth was Henry to do so, and to clutch the gold; for it was at the time he had his war of railing tongues, and hot disputes, and bannings, and excommunications with Thomas-à-Becket; and there was nothing to be done at Rome with the Pope and the cardinals, to lull the storm, without money; and so gold was as welcome to the royal treasury at that time, as grist is to thy father's mill, Grace," added the speaker, as he looked at the pretty wondering face of the miller's maid.

"And if report tells truth," observed the Sacrist, "the present king, his highness King Richard, was not sorry to have a like sum from the Lady Alicia, in another matter of wardship,—I mean that concerning the younger lady, the blooming Adela de Marmoutier, for such, I think, is the Norman damsel's name. How went that matter?"

"Marry, thus," answered Patch. "The Lady Alicia had an only brother, a Norman baron of great estate; and after her husband had perished in the Holy Land, she found much comfort in his affection. Well, this noble baron died also, as a noble baron should do, in battle; and thus was my poor lady bereft both of husband and brother, with no earthly creature kindred to her in blood, except a little child, her niece, the orphan daughter of her deceased brother, and sole heiress to all his castles and lands. To take charge of this infant girl, my lady passed over seas into Normandy, but could not settle matters about her till she came back again to England."

"And there was some dispute, we heard," said the Sacrist, "between her and our King Richard concerning the wardship of the child. Was it not so?"

"There was such a dispute about it," said Patch, "that nothing but the king's necessity and my lady's gold could settle it. Gold and necessity are two arbitrators in a quarrel, that soon kiss and make peace, and so the Lady Alicia paid his highness as much for the wardship of the Lady Adela, as she had before paid to his royal father to secure her own liberty for widowhood or marriage: a thousand marks were told down, and she forthwith stept into the king's place, and

became lawful guardian to her own orphan niece. This done she once more passed over seas into Normandy, took possession of the castle of Marmoutier in the name of her ward, lived there for a while, then travelled on holy pilgrimages to many a distant shrine, and has at length returned to England with her young charge, who is now a woman grown."

"Wisely has she done," said the Cellarer, "for Philippe of France, many men think, hath a shrewd eye on Normandy, now that the princely Richard lies like a caged lion in his cell. Philippe, it is thought, will stir a war there, for the mastery of the land. The Lady Alicia and her fair ward are safer far in England at such a time."

The discourse had arrived at this point, when it was very suddenly disturbed by a slip of a boy, one of the scholars of the abbey school, who acted as a sort of page to the cellarer.

This lad was alert and shrewd, one who delighted to assist in any matter that transgressed the rules of the house, for the pure pleasure of doing so, and of exercising that degree of adroitness and wit that is necessary to prevent detection, or to frame an excuse when unavoidably detected. The boy was very useful to the cellarer, and had found his account in being so, especially in the fruit season, or when any sports were going on in the neighbourhood or the town.

He was always prying about, and from some hidden nook had seen Grace Bolt slip in at the cellarer's window. Knowing how much her presence within the abbey walls was contrary to rule, he now came to give notice, in order that the coast might be cleared; as he had just seen, from one of the towers, *a progress*, as it was called, moving along the Okehampton road, towards the good town of Tavistock. By a banner and the cross being carried before the chief rider, with the black cloaks and white scapularies of the rest, the lad was sure the progress must be a body of churchmen.

"A banner and a cross, carried before the chief rider. It must be the archdeacon, then," exclaimed the Cellarer; "what doth he here?—our monastery is exempt! Up, my lass, up, never mind the pippins; our lad, here, shall run down with a basket of them presently to the mill,—up, and out of the window with you,—the archdeacon is not a man to play with. He hath not the absent mind of our Lord Abbot, who heeds not trifles that occur around him, when he is busied in his own concerns. Neither has he the consideration of the prior, nor the goodnature of the sub-prior. The archdeacon is as the eye of the bishop; and though he be but one man, and

therefore may his lordship, in respect to him, be said to be one-eyed, yet this one eye of his hath a piercing vision,—therefore up and away with you. And you, Master Patch, had best not linger. Though you might have excuse,—you bear a message from your mistress, or a dozen of tapers or so from the noble Lady Alicia to St. Rumon's shrine."

"I bear candle ends for my lady, I!" said Patch indignantly. "I would have you to know such offices are performed by the varlets of our house, and not by me, who wear no silver collar. I am a free man, and am neither serf nor thrall; and moreover this is not Candlemas for the setting up of lights. I shall out at the great gates, even as I came in at them; and if I meet the archdeacon, I may chance to tell him that there are more fools than one who come on errands to the abbey, as he may find to his cost, if he have any matter to debate with Abbot Baldwin. But mum for that, I will even depart."

"Do so," said the Cellarer, "and now I bethink me, 'tis best you should go forth by the great gates; but you, Grace, you must once more out of the window." And without further speech the good man assisted her, and she was soon on the outside of his apartment. He stayed but to charge her to slip away by the postern door ere it should be locked, and not to say to any one where she had been.

Having given these directions, the cellarer closed the window, hurried off Patch, and, with the assistance of the sacrist, cleared the tables of cups and flagons; washed his face, to cool the heat of rather a copious refreshment, and went forth to seek the sub-prior, to confer with him on some matters of import, before the arrival of the archdeacon.

CHAPTER III.

A clerk ther was of Oxenforde also,
That unto logicke hadde long ago.

But all be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
But all that he might of his frendes hente,
On bokes and on learning he it spente,
And besily gan for the soules prae,
Of them, that gave him wherewith to scolaie.
Of studie toke he moste cure and hede,
Not a word spake he more than was nede,
And that was said in form and reverence,
And short, and quicke, and ful of high sentence,
Sonning in moral vertue was his speech,
And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

CHAUCER.

ABBOT BALDWIN, the superior of our monastery, was of Norman blood. Though he shared to the fullest extent in the pride and spirit of oppression with which the victorious Normans harassed the unhappy Saxons and their aggrieved descendants, yet, with more prudence than most of his countrymen had displayed, he forbore to express his scorn of the vanquished by those outward demonstrations of contempt which are so offensive to a conquered people, still smarting under the yoke; and still, with the bitterness of unavailing regret, cherishing the recollection of the privileges they had lost by the overthrow of their fathers in their own land.

Thus, though invested with arbitrary power from the high station he held in the west, Abbot Baldwin and his rule were not other than acceptable both to Norman and Saxon; for if the latter remembered he was of the blood of their detested conquerors, they also recollected how different he was in his conduct towards themselves, to the tyrannical feudal barons, who frequently treated them with far less consideration than they bestowed on their hounds; bought and sold them with their lands; scourged, imprisoned, or hanged them, as slaves and criminals, on the slightest suggestions of their interest, passion, or caprice.

Abbot Baldwin had also another strong hold on the good will of the Saxons. The school denominated Saxon, originally instituted by Orgar, the founder of the abbey, and suppressed in consequence of the havoc made by the Danes, who burnt the sacred edifice soon after its foundation, had been revived by Abbot Baldwin; he had even restored to it its ancient name—the Saxon School. Had the abbot given the fallen Thanes, the Ceorls, the Socmen, and even those of a far humbler grade, gold or precious stones to console them for their poverty and degradation, he could not have gratified them so much as he did by this simple act of restoring to them their school, at so ancient and important a place as the Abbey of Tavistock.

The truth is, that Baldwin was a learned man; and feeling desirous to preserve in all its purity the Saxon tongue (which was more a curious than a copious language), to prevent its being utterly lost and confounded with the jargon of Norman French, then beginning to mingle itself with the ancient Saxon in common conversation, he determined to revive the school for the youth of the conquered people, where no tongues but the Latin and the pure Saxon were to be taught, though the various sciences of the period were to be admitted without restraint. The revival of such an institution was most welcome to the public; and even Norman youths were not refused instruction, provided, like the less favoured race, they would strictly conform to the rules as well as the learning of the school. From this cause Abbot Baldwin became as popular with the Saxons, and, indeed, with all parties, as any abbot could be, who, born in Normandy, had been transferred to England, and was there put over so large a body of men, and so many thousand acres, with all the live stock, both human and bestial upon it, at a period when slavery, with its attendant hardships and injustice, was a part and parcel of the laws of the land.

In his person, Abbot Baldwin was tall and well formed, and had that grace about him inherent to men who are cast in Nature's finest mould; so that education seems to have little to do with it; for those whose limbs are of such exact proportion in themselves can scarcely be said to move in an ungainly manner, though they are strangers to the arts of discipline in the training of the human frame.

The abbot had numbered nearly sixty years, but as he had never known hardship nor sickness, and was far from being one who deemed person of too little consequence to require

attention, he had bestowed so much care upon the preservation of his own, that he looked, as very handsome men always do, when past the middle age, many years younger than he really was. His features were regular, and of a noble cast; his forehead high, with a pair of as bright and piercing eyes as ever shot their glances from beneath cowl or hood. And we may here be permitted to remark, that the hood, when worn so as to throw a shade over the upper part of the head, gives to it that air of grandeur and awe which the partially revealed and partially concealed never fails to create: a thing so poetical in personal beauty, and that produces such a wondrous effect in a head like Abbot Baldwin's, characterised as it was by intellect and expression. His mouth was finely and delicately formed; such as we very commonly see in persons of high birth and the most refined education.

Though our abbot was stately in his attire when he rode forth, or went into society on occasions of ceremony, yet his dress in common was simple; being only distinguished from the rest of the brothers by its finer material, and by the precious rosary of gold and amber that depended from his girdle. A crucifix also of like metal was suspended from a gold chain about his neck. For the rest, his scapular, an upper garment worn beneath the black tunic, was of fine white cloth; and over the tunic (that was girt round the middle with a leathern belt), he wore a mantle of black samite; to which was attached a cowl long and peaked: this, at the pleasure of the wearer, could be drawn over the head and about the face, or be cast back upon the shoulders, so as to leave bare the shaven crown, with its fringe of short hair suffered to grow round the head, just above the ears, like a wreath or chaplet. Though the abbot was privileged to wear a cap lined with fur, Baldwin seldom did so within doors; and by the humility of his general attire, it would seem as if he only adopted one of a more costly nature when he deemed it necessary to the ceremonial of his high office. Common eyes measure the dignity of the individual by the awe inspired by his presence; and common men feel respect for the office in proportion to the power which they fancy is indicated by the wealth and splendour of the official.

At the time we introduce Baldwin to our reader, he was seated in an apartment of the abbey that was not liable to intrusion; it was called the abbot's hall. The ceiling and paneling were of oak; the rafters of the former were black

with age and smoke; for the huge stone chimney that stood at the lower end of the hall sent, in every high wind, more than half its smoke, with the eddies that roared down its tunnel, into the room.

On the paneling towards the upper end of this apartment hung a long and narrow piece of tapestry, the work of the nuns of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall; of whose house the sister of our abbot was the prioress. This tapestry represented in worsted on cloth the acts of sundry Cornish saints of eminence, and more especially those of St. Michael. The principal subject was the saint's contest with the devil for the body of Moses. In it the archangel appeared in chain mail, with the cross on his shield like a crusader. And in order to paint, as they thought, the devil a little blacker than he was usually deemed to be, the godly sisters who executed the work had given him, as well as their simple skill could represent it, the physiognomy of a Jew; the foul fiend's long beard, gaberdine, and yellow cap, being all characteristic of that despised and unhappy race.

In this hall there was likewise a window of great beauty; it terminated the room opposite the dais. It was magnificent though somewhat gloomy, and shed its subdued light upon the pavement of glazed tiles in streams of variegated colours. This, called the St. George's window, was the gift of a Ferrers, a knight banneret, who had been a very great benefactor to the abbey, and had not confined his donations to the church alone.

The window represented the acts of the warlike saint and patron of England. Amongst these were some with which modern times are less familiar than they are with the story of his killing the dragon by thrusting his lance down the monster's throat. Even that celebrated combat was not represented in the manner in which we may now not unfrequently behold it, whilst swinging on a sign-post before the door of a house open to the public for good cheer. No, in the window in question St. George was made to slay his dragon in the land of Egypt, whilst a king and a queen were seen looking on from the top of a pyramid, their virgin daughter, at a distance, chained to a pillar, and attended by her little dog. This inscription appeared beneath:

' Hic mactat draconem.'

In another compartment the saint had his head cut off by

a foe, and very nicely put on again by the Virgin Mary. These words were beneath,

‘*Hic beata Maria resuscitat eum a tumulo.*’

But a window of such warlike records, more suited to the chamber of a military monk or knight templar than to the hall of an abbot of Benedictines, was not the only indication of a warlike spirit within precincts apparently so devoted to seclusion and peace. Several suits of armour, some helmets and morions, with many an arbaleste or cross-bow, and many a cloth-yard arrow and barbed missile, with bill and hook, hung in the abbot's hall; indicating that weapons were not wanting to put into the hands of his yeomen, prickers, bordarii, serfs, and villeins, if any sudden alarm might call on the monastery to arm. Indeed Tavistock Abbey had never been unmindful of its defence since it was so suddenly surprised and burnt by the Danes.

There was also in this chamber, a few early hard Gothic paintings on paneling, principally consisting of rude attempts at the portraits of the founders of the abbey. Orgar, in the odour of sanctity, at the gate of heaven, presenting to St. Peter the abbey church of Tavistock, which he held in his hand, as he kneeled to the apostle, who, on the sight of it, opens to him the gates of bliss; whilst a whole row of cherubim are singing, piping, harping, fiddling, and ringing the handbells, to welcome him to heaven.

The picture which Abbot Baldwin presented in his own person, as he sat in the hall we have described, would have been a fine one for Rembrandt, had Rembrandt been then living to secure it upon canvass. It was a picture calculated to touch the imagination. There, within the shade of the gorgeous window, and beneath a carved canopy of oak, where the arches and stone pillars supported a roof of Gothic gloom, sat, in the silence of monastic meditation, Abbot Baldwin. His manly figure was striking, though shrouded in the garments of a black monk. His cowl thrown back, as his head leaned on his hand and the arm rested on that of his chair. The expression of his face was severe, thoughtful, but majestic. The brow was in repose, the muscles of the mouth relaxed, the eye fixed, but not on outward objects; for at that moment Baldwin had neither sight nor attention but for the things within his own deep, thinking, and energetic mind.

Did we continue to look upon the scene with the eye of a painter, we should say it was finely finished by a second

figure, that, soon after we opened this chapter, entered upon it and completed its most picturesque effect. Baldwin, striking with a wooden hammer on the table before him (which hammer he used, as we now do a bell, to call a domestic), the summons was answered by a youth about seventeen years old, who was of a most manly aspect.

His limbs though slight were muscular; and the dress he wore, that of a Saxon boy, seemed well calculated to shew to advantage his tall and handsome person. He was attired in a tunic of red woollen cloth, which descended to the knees, and had long close sleeves. The throat was bare. The tunic was bound round the waist by a girdle, or, as it was called in the Saxon, a *rooc*, beautifully embroidered with a running pattern of flowers and birds in silks of divers colours. His *brech* or *hosen* scarcely reached the knee, and on his legs he had the *scin hosen*, or stockings formed of leather; over these a *socca*, consisting of bandages of red cloth, that united to a stout leathern sole, crossed the foot and legs up to the knees, in the same way as to this day we see Highlanders wear red-crossed stockings; a fashion concerning which we hesitate not to venture the opinion that it is nothing less than a remnant of this ancient *Socca* or *Scancberg* of the Saxons.

Over his shoulders the youth wore a short mantle, like the Roman Pallium, that fastened at the shoulders by a *fulæ* or brooch of wrought silver. On his wrists he had bracelets of carved ivory and silver; a collar of the same description was about his throat, and from it depended a *Bulla* or amulet, or charmed gem (a piece of superstition long retained by his people), that was formed of an engraved amethyst. It bore upon it the head of St. Luke. The charm in the present instance was worn to keep off leprosy, a disease then gaining ground in Europe, having been originally brought into its several countries from the East by the Crusaders, who frequently brought home nothing else from the holy wars. The dress, which from its curiosity, as well as its antiquity, we have here described at full to the reader, was long retained by the Saxons, who, even in their outward attire, were very long before they would adopt the fashions of the Normans. It was the common habit of civilians amongst that people, more or less costly, according to the material of which it was composed, and the ornaments and jewels by which it was enriched.

The wearer of the garments we have noticed was a Saxon youth of more than ordinary pretensions; but not in fortune, for he was poor, the fatherless son of a degraded thane,

degraded because that thane had taken part in some matter of a public nature against the Norman rulers of the land. But Cædmon the fatherless (for so was this youth called) had merit of a personal kind more than sufficient to counterbalance the hardships of his fortune. He had distinguished himself so much at the Saxon school, in the sciences as well as in the languages there taught, that he was a favourite with the Lord Abbot, who, delighting in the handsome appearance of those about him, allowed Cædmon the rich habit we have described, and promoted him not only to the honour of wielding a pen, of writing and illuminating manuscripts in the Scriptorium, but to that of being his own principal secretary, minstrel, and page: and we must here remark, that in all the great monasteries of the period, the sons of the noblest born among the novices or scholars were usually selected as pages of the abbot.

In his person Cædmon was graceful. His countenance open, frank, and manly. His complexion retained its natural fairness, for as he had been closely kept to the pursuits of the scholar, he had not shared much in those exercises common to the youth of his time, though he dearly loved the sports of the field whenever he could on any rare occasion be permitted to indulge in them. Cædmon had the large blue eye and the light yellow hair for which the Saxons were so celebrated; and that eye could become brilliant and sparkling in moments of strong emotion; and when circumstances connected with the affections called forth the finer feelings of his heart, its expression was no less animated than tender.

"Benedicite," said the Abbot, as Cædmon, bowing reverently, stood before him with a respectful air, holding in his hands a bundle of newly written parchments. "Optatus advenis," continued the Abbot. "Quid libellorum est in manibus?"

"Lectionem in linguam vernaculam translaturus sum," replied Cædmon.

"Ego te in ingenii palæstram et arenam inducam," said the Abbot.

"Nullum ego tribunal recuso," answered Cædmon, modestly, but without hesitation; and the abbot accordingly proceeded to put to this his favourite boy of the school, sundry questions respecting the studies and scholarship of the class; with which some of our readers, notwithstanding the universal education of these days, would be very little edified, did we follow it up in the monkish Latin dialogue in which the discussion was carried on; now and then mixed with the *Lingua Franca* of

the period, and even with good old Saxon, a tongue with which our abbot was well acquainted.

During the twelfth century, the subtleties of the Aristotelian logic were a most favourite study. But the Abbot of Tavistock, like John of Salisbury and Alan de Lisle, liked not that abuse of the cultivation of the reasoning powers which had become a perfect mania in many of the then existing schools. Indeed, sophistry and quibbling had risen to such a height, that as the clergy were in those days the clerks or lawyers of the country, the present ingenious gentlemen of the wig and gown, and the more dangerous part of the profession (in a few instances, the very sparrow-hawks of it), the attorneys, may lay claim to the canon lawyers of the twelfth century, as the fathers, grand-fathers, and originators of the nicest arts of subtlety and evasion: those arts which by quibbling, by going the round-about way through all the labyrinth of cross pleas, like cross roads, appeals, writs of error, etc. etc., may, by good management, keep a client in an excellent march and counter-march in pursuit of justice, instead of bringing him point-blank to the mark, and at once settling the matter. That witty Spaniard was no fool who said that many a lawyer defends his client as seamen do their ship in a storm, throwing overboard all it contains, that, if it be God's will, it may be brought into port—empty.

To return to our abbot.

"And what hath Radulphus, the logician, taught in the schools to-day, Cædmon?" he continued; "somewhat more, I trow, of that close and abstruse method, to which I am no friend."

"The subject of to-day's inquiry, most holy father," replied Cædmon, "proposed by Radulphus for discussion, was on the substantial form of sounds. There was a very hot debate between him and father Albertus on this matter; that Albertus, I mean, who is come to teach the singing novices counter-point in the song school."

"And how like you, Cædmon, the subtleties of these teachers?"

"Oh! how cold do all such studies appear to me, when compared to the divine arts of poetry and music!" replied the Saxon youth; "it is when I sing to my harp the poetry which has been inspired in my thoughts by the sight of nature, that I can forget all the griefs of this world: then do I seem to soar above them on a spirit's wing."

"To become a good poet thyself, Cædmon," said the Abbot,

"thou shouldst study the works of the best poets. Hast thou seen the Antioches of Joseph of Exeter? a poem wherein he makes the Croisade the subject. It will be an admirable exercise for thee, to render it into the Saxon tongue; though we like the Latinity of Joseph better than we do his hero, our King Richard."

"I have seen it, my lord," answered Cædmon; "but to my thinking, it lacks the essence of true poetry in those parts wherein Joseph describes the face of nature. Had he wandered over our hills as I have done, as the early day rises slowly from his bed of fleecy clouds, whilst our brightening rivers lift up their many voices, and the lark sings her shrill song, as chanticleer sounds the bugle note of morning to the cotter's ear, and calls him from his slumbers to labour in the field;—had the poet of Exeter studied these things in themselves, he would have better known how to sing of their delights. For my own part, I never look on the face of nature, at the morning or the evening hour, but my soul is on fire to sing her praise." Cædmon's eye dilated and flashed, as, with spirits raised to enthusiasm by youth and the love of song, he thus gave utterance to his feelings.

The abbot saw this, and said in a tone of friendly admonition—"My son, forget not in this ardent love for the gentle craft of the minstrel, that poetry is but as the gems or ornaments of human knowledge; whilst solid learning and moral philosophy are as her garments for summer and winter use, no less serviceable in the genial days of prosperity, than comfortable and sustaining in those of adversity. Cultivate ethics, therefore, my son, second only in excellence to the study of the canon law, and that of obedience to the church, which is obedience to God, for we may never forget—*Veritas à quo-cunque dicitur, à Deo est.*"

The abbot was here interrupted in his discourse with his favourite, by the blast of a horn. Thrice it rang through the old walls of the monastery.

"Go to the tower, at the end of the dortor," said the Abbot, addressing Cædmon, "the tower which overlooks the great gates, and tell me who it is that comes. That horn had a blast with it that might be heard to the very summit of the hills."

Cædmon obeyed and soon returned.

"It is the archdeacon and his train who come, may it please you, my lord," said the Saxon. "He bears the banner of the bishop, my lord of Exeter."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Abbot, "from Exeter, and to our

house! We hold our monastery exempt. What can make this man so bold to come hither with his state? Had he come to our poor abbey on his own account, he should have been welcome; but we admit not the authority of the diocesan here, and, therefore, we will not yield to it. Cædmon, dost thou know this man?"

"No, my lord, I know him only by repute, but men speak fairly of him, and say he is one who investigates to discover honesty, truth, and justice. He is the very eye of the bishop, who receives from him all the light he gathers respecting the monasteries of his diocese in the west."

"It shall not serve him to look into our concerns, Cædmon," said the Abbot. "You say you do not know him. I will teach you, then, what he is;—a wily subtle Norman, one who took part with the late king against Thomas-à-Becket, a supporter of the constitutions of Clarendon—which that primate opposed—giving up to laymen the power of administering the laws in the punishment of offences committed by the clergy. Such a yielding of the spiritual to the temporal power was not to be endured, for the honour or the independence of the church. Becket suffered exile, misery, strife,—yea, death! rather than yield the point; and here stands one, though of the church's humblest servants, who would be as bold,—one who, if he may not emulate Becket in greater things, would, at least, follow in his steps in the courage to suffer as he suffered, to die as he died, for the independence of his office and of his monastery. By the holy bones of St. Thomas, I feel my spirit mount to a yet stronger resolution, when I do but name his martyrdom. Cædmon!"

"My lord."

"We will meet this archdeacon; we will entertain him with all courtesy, but we will confer with him in no place save the chapter. We will have no private tutoring here, no proposals for our ear in the locutory, with another manner of argument for us in the assembly of our brethren."

"You will not meet the archdeacon then, holy father, till you do so in the chapter?" said Cædmon.

"I said not so," replied the Abbot; "he shall have all hospitable greeting; our house must not be wanting in its duty to a wayfarer; but we will have no private conference with this man, this Alberic the Norman, once of the abbey of Le Bec. Well do we know him,—a very subtle man, of whom it may be said, as Sallust said of Cataline, *cujuslibet rei simulator atque dissimulator*, we will not trust him. He the bishop's eye!

he a searcher after truth! why, I tell thee, Cædmon, he is but as the tool of men in power—a very cameleon; for whatever colour the bishop may take, that doth he become on the instant. Every bishop of Exeter is with him the perfection of man and churchman; and the last ever the best.”

“Will you, my lord, be pleased to feast him in the guest chamber, or in the refectory? I must give notice of your pleasure to the cellarer.”

“O! in the refectory,” replied the Abbot. “Our investigator after rule shall see that we keep rule. And hark thee, Cædmon, who lectures to-day at the refecton?”

“I do, my lord.”

“Well, then, do thou give us that piece, Cædmon, which thou hast penned for the history of our abbey, taken from our records, the foundation of our house by Orgar: the archdeacon shall see we lack not scholars here. And, hark thee, charge the cellarer to be punctual in the performance of his duty on ourself; we will not abate an atom of our privileges. Let him suffer no one to sit till we are seated; let him give but half a sextary of wine to any brother who asks for beverage at dinner; and bid the cupbearers be ready to attend on their abbot at the table: we may not slight ceremony towards our person as superior of this house, at a time when there are those who would pass on us an authority that we deny. Go, therefore, Cædmon, look diligently after these matters, and bid the vestiarius attend upon us in our chamber. We will change these mean garments for robes of more state. Yet, Cædmon, these are but outward things: we should robe ourself rather in the mantle of righteousness and of simplicity, and trust the rest to heaven, for all these indignities may but be aimed at us for our spiritual good, since they are but among those changes and variations of fortune that wean holy men from the world. Yet this archdeacon,—it were good for his soul’s sake to humble his pride! He visit here to look after our abbey!—our rule!—but I will be patient.”

Having thus vented his spleen against the unfortunate archdeacon, Abbot Baldwin went to prepare for his reception, which he intended to make as tedious by ceremonies as he could possibly render it. In the mean time we must retrograde a little, and state some matters that occurred at the abbey just before the archdeacon reached its gates.

CHAPTER IV.

The garden was by measuring
 Right even and square in compassing.
 It was as long as it was large,
 Of fruit had every tree his charge.
 There were, and that wote I full well,
 Of pomegranettes a full great dele.

These trees were set, that I devise,
 One from another in assise
 Five fadome or sixe, I trow so,
 But they were high, and great also,
 And for to keepen out well the sunne,
 The croppes were so thicke irunne,
 That every braunche in other knitte,
 And full of green leaves sitte,
 That sunne might there none descend,
 Lest the tender grasses shend.

The Romaunt of the Rose.

TRUST not two things, says the old proverb—a calm sea and a woman's curiosity. We apprehend that, good girl as Grace Bolt really was, it would have been more prudent in the cellarer, when he dismissed her, instead of receiving her assurances only to leave the abbey by the postern door, had he fairly seen her off the premises himself; for it so chanced that, not very far from the postern in question, by following the path under the wall, a private way was to be found which led direct into my Lord Abbot's garden.

Grace had not been in it since she was a little child, when the late abbot would sometimes take her there himself, and leading her by the hand, would walk up and down one of the shady alleys of the holly and the sycamore, and would listen to her prattle.

What now possessed her, and under circumstances so pressing, to think of peeping into the garden, we cannot say, as we are not sufficiently masters of the philosophy of the human mind, to be able to account for all the freaks that will often excite the fancy and overrule the will of a pretty, petted, and spoiled girl of eighteen. Perhaps the idea of visiting the spot

was at this moment simply suggested to her by seeing the little private door which led to it standing most invitingly open, and no one within sight. The garden being more especially the abbot's, the cellarer had never allowed her to trespass within its bounds, now that she had become old enough to fall under the clause of prohibited goods at the monastery. And ever since she was forbidden she felt the strongest wish to see the place. Yet, recollecting the cellarer's admonition on the subject, it was not without a struggle between her curiosity and her conscience (something like that between Master Launcelot and his internal monitor, when he meditated shewing a clean pair of heels to the Jew, and running away from old Shylock to a new master), that Grace now resolved to satisfy at once her idle fancy by entering the forbidden ground.

No sooner had she done so, and passed within its first bounds, than she kept close in the long walk, under the abbey walls, for greater security. The walk was thickly set, on the wall side, with a clothing of ivy, and on the other by a tall row of sycamores, planted very nigh to each other. This long avenue, for such it was, extended as far as the last of the stew-ponds, which lay at the end of the wall. By peeping between the boles of the trees, Grace saw the gay flower-beds, the fruits, the Gothic pleasure-house, and all the delights of my Lord Abbott's garden, and more especially was she struck with the grand appearance of the old stone cross that stood in the very centre, and the pond, and the old willow drooping its branches into the waters, about which she had heard tell the wildest tale of superstition.

On these, and many more such things, did Grace now look with eager and wondering eyes. She would have liked very well to have helped herself to a little fruit, for though the cellarer was bountiful to her in this respect, there is always something indescribably sweet to the young in picking for themselves. But she would not venture out of the shade of the trees, for fear of being seen from the monastery windows. At length, satisfied with gazing, she thought of making her retreat, when a pretty little bird that flew down from its nest among the ivy, attracted her eye. It was a robin; a robin, that most bold of birds, most fighting, as well as most familiar. It came so near Grace, now with its stiff and straight legs hopping on before her, then just rising and flitting aside to a bush or bough, then again brushing its wing on the ground, and still on the flutter, and still seeming to invite her onward, that she, girl-like, fol-

lowed too far, in the hope to see where the nest might be. But ere she could discover the retreat of this pretty pecksy in search of his flapsy, what was her dismay on perceiving through the trees, the sub-prior, Sir Simon, the curate of the parish, and the cellarer himself coming towards the long walk in which she had hoped to be concealed. She stayed to see no more, but with the foot of a fawn ran in all haste to the postern. But what again was her consternation on finding the door locked! She knew not where to go, till recollecting she had observed the door of the still-house to be open (the still-house was a tower situated in the boundary wall by the Tavy side without, and flanked within by the long walk of the garden), she resolved there to seek shelter, in the forlorn hope that she might not be detected. She reached it in safety, ascended at once the outside steps, and got into the upper apartment, a place very seldom visited except by the monks, who there distilled their medicines and sweet waters before breakfast, for every Benedictine abbey had a school for medicine within its walls. In this apartment there were two narrow windows; Grace went to that which overlooked the river in the direction towards the old stone bridge.

The miller's maid peeped cautiously through the lattice, where her eyes were speedily gratified with a sight that all the town, men, women, and children, seemed to be running out to witness—the progress of the archdeacon. It was evident that he was engaged on some mission from the bishop, as he came in state. She saw the whole procession, but she liked it not so well as the sights she had seen at the octaves of Easter, at the fairs, and rustic sports of May-day.

First came a knight and two esquires, each armed and mounted, and followed by six archers in their short tunics and steel caps, for there were too many bands of outlaws and thieves at this period in England to make the roads safe for a journey of any distance without a guard. Then came a mounted priest bearing a banner, on which was embroidered a mitre, and beneath a crosier crossed by a key of gold. After the banner-bearer, came another ecclesiastic, also mounted, and carrying aloft a cross. Then followed the archdeacon himself, well hooded and furred, and seated on a palfrey whose housings were plain and without embroidery, for he was a man of no pomp in his equipage, beyond what might be absolutely necessary for the occasion on which he moved. He was attended by his chaplains and train, each man being attired in a black frock and white scapulary, and each having his

head well protected with a thick furred hood. The progress was closed by six more archers and a wagon, for there being no good monastery on the road between Exeter and Tavistock, the archdeacon had travelled with all necessities and comforts about him. He had also a couple of pack-horses and a sumpter-mule; the former carried his mail-trunks, and the latter the especial services of plate for his table, his breviaries, his chalices, and his priest's cope. On the top of the sumpter-mule, agreeably to the singular fashion of the time, sat an ape, dressed in scarlet and silver. All the animals of burthen had their heads gaily set off with ribbons and silver bells, and a stout mastiff was tethered to the back part of the wagon by a long chain, so that he kept a post of very useful watch and guard over the viands and the comforts of the party.

Having seen the procession clear the bridge, Grace knew that in ten minutes it would be passing within the monastery's gates. Not doubting, therefore, the holy men she had espied in the garden were by this time gone forth to meet it, she once more ventured from her hiding-place, her intent being to steal round the house and endeavour to gain speech with one of the scholars, to whom she knew she could with safety impart her trespass, and from whom she might seek aid for her deliverance. But in this plan she was also thwarted. No sooner had she reached the last of the tower steps, than she again caught sight of the three individuals who had before so much alarmed her. There was no time for consideration, for they were coming towards the very spot where she stood; only the boughs of a large old tree, that drooped over her head, at this moment concealed her. As her last chance, she now, therefore, slipped into the lower or ground floor of the still-house, and hid herself behind its half-open door.

But cross purposes, like misfortunes, never come alone. How it happened we cannot exactly tell; yet true it is, just as the sub-prior was answering some remark of Sir Simon the curate, they all three walked up to the still-house.

"Never tell me," quoth the Sub-prior, "of the archdeacon coming to look after the keeping of rule within our house, by order of the bishop. Why, there is no house of Benedictines within the realm where stricter order is taken with all within its walls. Canonical rule never forgotten; Lauds, Prime, and Tierce, always sung. Not a fast neglected; no capons and fat swans allowed in Lent. No leaving an empty refectory that the brothers may regale, contrary to rule, in their own cells. No want of rods and disciplines, as the precentor can

witness, who makes his regular supply of the new, as the boys make a bonfire of the old, the week before Ash-Wednesday. No want of hair-shirts here: no babbling at compline. After that hour, our silence, Sir Simon, is so absolute, that it would be difficult to say if some of our brethren were dozing or meditating on holy things; and then, for the sanctity of the brotherhood, they will not even endanger their eyes, far less their thoughts. We admit no temptations here: shun them. Fly the devil is our rule; and so, not so much as even the petticoat of a woman is admitted within our walls; save by my Lord Abbot, who sees ladies of estate in the locutory; or poor old women at the alms-gate or in the cloisters. In good sooth, Sir Simon, my Lord Abbot holds all the sex safest at a distance, be the age of the individual what it may. So that he encourages not the old women to come too often to the Maundy, when he washes the feet of the poor on Holy Thursday in the church porch. The gossips, however, like not the restriction; for, truth to tell, they felt their pride mightily gratified in the late Abbot Walter's time (good man, peace be to his soul!) by having such a personage to wash their feet; and so it was their custom not to suffer them to be touched for many a week before the Maundy, but to reserve their perfect ablution for my Lord Abbot's own hands."

This was the longest speech the sub-prior had ever made, but he was warm in defence of his abbey; and though Sir Simon essayed to speak he would not let him, but summed up all, like an advocate, in these words, by way of peroration: "No, no, Sir Curate, we admit no women here; for did we find one within these walls, knowing she could never come where there is such discipline, unless it were by gramery, and for evil intents, we should immediately seize upon her, scourge her for a wanton, make her stand in a white sheet for a harlot, and, may be, burn her for a witch."

Grace Bolt, who stood behind the half-opened door, trembling, fearing, panting like a hunted hare, on hearing these threats proceed from the mouth of the sub-prior, and knowing that in another instant she should be detected, in her panic rushed from the tower, threw herself on her knees at the feet of the cellarer, and begged Brother Thomas, for Our Lady's sake, to save her, to bear witness to her innocence, that she was no harlot, no witch, that she might not be burnt alive; and speaking as well as she could between her sobs, that she had only slipt in at the window of his cell, by his own invitation, on that blessed morning, and entirely to please him.

Here Grace stopped in her voluntary confession, not for want of matter, but for want of breath.

How shall we describe the scene that followed? The astonishment of the sub-prior, the rage of the curate (for Grace Bolt was one of his parish and of his own flock), and the utter surprise and dismay of the cellarer. For a few moments, all carried on a discourse of looks, wonder being the predominant feeling with each; but this could not last. Had there been no one present but the sub-prior, the cellarer would not have cared a rush for the matter, in being thus caught. For had the sub-prior thought proper to be a little angry on the occasion, he must soon have been reconciled to the cellarer, on the same excellent principle that makes Peachem and Lockitt friends in the *Beggar's Opera*; namely, because the one could hang the other, did it come to a matter of detection. But the curate of the parish, Sir Simon, was present, and that altogether altered the nature of the case.

Sir Simon, like most of his brothers among the secular clergy, looked with a jealous eye, from out his poor manse, on the comforts and enjoyments of the monks in their more costly abbey; and delighted to have a hole to pick in their coats, and to detect any one of their frailties, in order that he might chuckle over it as he sat at laymen's boards, and did, what a single man could do, to fight a thousand, for in number the monks of Tavistock Abbey were no less strong. To have him present, therefore, to witness this shame, was not to be thought of by the worthy sub-prior with any degree of patience; and yet, not wishing to run the risk of offending and irritating the feelings of the cellarer, he felt that he had a very nice part to play at such a crisis. He paused a moment, therefore, to consider how to proceed. But not a little was the sub-prior's embarrassment increased, when he looked on the curate, and beheld the strange commotion that seemed to war within his breast.

Sir Simon's large goggle eyes appeared to flame up with passion, like a couple of torches or lighted brands; his lips quivered, his chest heaved, he pressed his teeth together as if to keep in the rage that was ready to fly out, like the hot steam of a boiling caldron. At length he stammered forth in a voice sharpened to the keenest pitch of bitterness—"You Thomas the cellarer, you have drawn astray one of my flock; you have been the wolf to steal into my fold; you have robbed me of my choicest lamb; you have outraged all my feelings; that is, I mean, my feelings for holy mother church; for I am

here in right of her cure, and all the souls and bodies in the parish are given to me. And to me shall you answer for one lamb that is led astray. The bishop himself shall hear of this; I will prefer my complaint against you to the arch-deacon; I will make you stand to your account; will you or nil you, you shall answer it."

"I am answerable to none but my Lord Abbot," said the Cellarer stoutly; "and I have done no ill. Speak! Grace, speak, what harm has come to you for being in my cell this morning; what did I give you when you came there?"

"Cherries and apples," sobbed out Grace Bolt, not daring to move from her kneeling position.

"Apples!" echoed Sir Simon; "apples! Holy Mary protect us! the very temptation of Eve, the very wile of the serpent! To tempt a silly girl like that with apples! and then to cry, no harm done! How do I know but that they may have been the apples of the Dead Sea, which some of the reckless Crusaders bring from the East; fair outside, full of ashes within. She may, by eating them, have sold herself to the devil, for aught I know; and then how am I to answer for the lost sheep of my fold?"

"Brother, brother," said the Sub-prior, in a conciliatory voice, "let me pray you not to make a brawl of this matter: for though you, Sir Simon, are secular and we conventual, yet are we both men of holy church; therefore would I counsel peace, forbearance, and brotherly love."

"There hath been too much of it, I fear, for a sister," said Sir Simon, with a sneer; "I marvel you so excuse him."

"I excuse him not," replied the Sub-prior; "mistake me not, good Sir Simon, I only pity him: truly apprehending that this after all may arise from a snare of the enemy. We know how potent he can be. He may have whispered to our brother here, that apples were innocent things. We do not say they are so; holy St. Bennet forbid that we should call that innocent which lost our first parents Paradise. But the cellarer hath done her no wrong."

"I know not that," said Sir Simon. "To entice her thither, I hold to be as foul an act as was the sin of King David, when he laid a snare for the undoing of Queen Bathsheba, as he looked upon her from the house-top."

The cellarer held up his hands in wonder, as well he might, at the hearing of such a charge.

"Nay, Sir Simon, nay," said the Sub-prior, "there you go too far. Such a charge cannot be made within reason. Not

that we would altogether excuse Thomas the cellarer, though we do in some measure excuse him, always supposing he has acted under the delusion of the enemy; therefore I, being sub-prior, and not choosing to trouble the Lord Abbot in this matter, do herewith enjoin a penance on him for the breaking of rule, which shall be sufficient for his repentance and amendment. Brother Thomas, I recommend you to sing this day before you sleep, the Seven Penitential Psalms; and furthermore to humble your human pride, which may have had some influence over your will to induce this lapse of rule, possibly whispering to you that you were comely and portly in the sight of this silly wench,—to humble, I say, your human pride, I recommend you also, as an act of degradation in penance, to assist this very day in the hospitaler—to assist by there receiving the newly arrived guests, and by drawing off their boots and socks, to ease them after their journey, and putting on their feet the taleaparia, or old shoes. And should any further or voluntary motion of penance occur to your own mind, you can, good brother, call in at the confessional, after compline, and confer with me respecting the same."

A sly glance of grave good-humour which accompanied these last words, intimated to the cellarer how much of this speech was made to save appearances, and how much to exact obedience. Grace Bolt being twitted by brother Thomas for speaking before she was spoken to, and, by so doing, making a great coil about a little matter; receiving also a moderate scolding from the Sub-prior for the present, and the promise of one far more severe by and by from Sir Simon himself, was finally dismissed, and hurried off as privately as could be, not only from the garden of my Lord Abbot, but from the abbey's bounds to its outmost wall.

CHAPTER V.

Love it is an hateful peace,
 A free acquittance without release,
 And through the fret full of falseheed,
 A sikernesse all set in drede
 In herte is a despairing hope,
 And full of hope, it is wanhope.

For none is of so mokell prise,
 Ne no man founden so wise,
 Ne none so high of parage,
 Ne no man found of witte so sage,
 No man so hardie ne so wight,
 Ne no man of so mokell might,
 None so fulfilled of bountie,
 That he with love may daunted be;
 All the world holdeth this say,
 Love maketh all to gone misway.

Romaunt of the Rose.

WHEN Sir Simon, the curate, quitted the monastery, he was too much heated with the fumes of anger and jealousy to be capable of cool reflection. The offence, therefore, of the cellarer, in respect to Grace Bolt, appeared before his imagination in the most false and exaggerated colours. But thinking the detection of the girl herself gave him an advantage over her hitherto obdurate spirit, which he had long desired to possess, he determined not to lose the occasion, but to go forthwith to the dwelling of Grace, in the somewhat singular and contradictory characters of an amorous suitor, and an offended pastor to the strayed but still precious lamb of his flock.

Now let not the reader be shocked at this assertion, for Sir Simon meant no harm to Grace; for "all he did, he did in honour," with a little policy to boot the more readily to help the work. The truth is, he had long looked towards her with an eye of affection, and purposed making her his own in an honest way, by making her his wife.

In order to explain this to our readers, we must first tell them, that so long did the English secular clergy continue to

marry, it was not till some years after the date of our narrative that their doing so was altogether, as a crying sin, rooted out of the land.

In the early part of the twelfth century, during the archbishopric of Anselm, the severest canons had been made in the councils of Westminster against the marriage of the clergy. But these were so indifferently observed, that others of a yet more severe nature were enacted, whereby all priests were enjoined to put away their wives, and never after to see or speak with them, except on occasions of great necessity, in the presence of two or more witnesses. These laws, however, being found insufficient to prevent the supposed offence, the Church turned her fury principally against the women, as the weaker party concerned in the crime, and therefore the more easily to be subdued; consequently any woman who should be induced to commit the offence of marrying a secular priest, became subject to punishment, the same as an adulteress; no difference was made, no mitigation. But feelings of natural affection were stronger than all the canons instituted for their suppression; and so much did the clergy continue to marry, that at last the Church, despairing by her own authority to prevent the evil, insisted on the king's putting in force the laws against it. The monarch, however, who was expected to enforce these severe penalties (Henry the Second), was, perhaps, too conscious of his own frailties in respect to the weaker sex, to feel much interest in the matter of their chastisement. And not liking, may be, to be too hard upon those whom God had joined together in matrimony, if holy or unholy, and at the same time not altogether wishing to be at cross purposes with the Church, he went exactly half way between both parties; and thinking that a good sum paid down, as we now pay an impost on forbidden goods, would satisfy canonical justice, and put the loves of husbands to the test (as all priests were at liberty to put away their wives if they did not choose to pay for them), he contented himself with laying a round sum on the head of every ecclesiastic who had a wife; a tax which instantly made her, in the literal sense of the word, a very dear thing. And as Richard of the lion heart, the successor of Henry, who by every possible exaction oppressed his subjects to supply his necessities for the holy wars, privately winked at the custom; any priest, in his time, who, on what was called inquisition, could pay a good sum into the exchequer of amercements and fines, was allowed to keep his spouse without fear of molestation. Or,

at least, at no other rate of annoyance than that of being twitted by a stricter secular than himself, envied by the monks, and looked down upon with scorn by those self-satisfied persons, the righteous over much, who condemned all sins and affections for which they had not in themselves the slightest inclination: a race of censors quite as rife in the nineteenth as in the twelfth century.

We deemed it right to say thus much in regard to the marriages of the secular clergy, in justice to Sir Simon, that his reputation might be cleared from all suspicion, and that he might stand forth in the eyes of our reader, even as he did in his own, as a most worthy and meritorious suitor of Grace Bolt of the mill, being instigated to undertake his suit by that most powerful of all passions—love. Love, which, like a fire, shews neither sense nor respect in its rage, seeing it sends forth its flames hither and thither, enters the palaces of kings and nobles, and the cottages of villagers and serfs, without distinction, and when once bent on a destructive course, consumes where it had once only comforted and cherished, and never stops in its career till pride is laid low in the dust; and will, when seemingly extinct, frequently send up a flame from its ashes, and even then will linger amongst the very destruction and ruin it has made.

Such is love with many; but with our Sir Simon it was, just at the time we introduce him to our reader, far more like a flambeau or a torch, that flamed high, making a dazzling and glaring rather than a pleasant and a steady light, sending out streams of black smoke, and casting its sparks in every direction. In truth, Sir Simon was not merely up to the ears in love, but from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he was all over in it;—he had tumbled into it, for he neither saw, moved, thought, nor spoke, but Grace Bolt was before his eyes, in his path, in his mind, or on his tongue. With what pretensions to success, in respect to his own person and attractions, let our readers decide from the following sketch of him.

At a time when the clergy were by far the most educated class of the community, when many of them were really learned as men, and accomplished as gentlemen, Sir Simon was, if brought into contact with such of his cloth, very like a wild man that had been caught in the woods amongst the bands of outlaws and half savage persons who then infested England. He was altogether unacquainted with the customs of the higher orders of society in his day; so that the Abbot

of Tavistock, and many others, looked upon him as a churl, entitled to a certain degree of toleration only on account of his cloth. He was, it was said, of true Danish breed, with the blood of a great Saxon grandfather intermixed; yet he deemed himself pure Norman, because it was the fashion of the time so to be, or so to appear.

Sir Simon had a head of hair fiery red; a little nose that looked as if only half-formed by nature, when she had been disturbed whilst originally squeezing it into shape; a large mouth, and, though full and goggled, deep sunk eyes, overshadowed by a pair of shaggy eyebrows. These peculiarities of feature altogether presented a countenance so singular, so strange, and so wild, that many on first sight of it did not know if it were most calculated to make them laugh or to make them fear. This face, so oddly put together in one of nature's freaks, could, in moments of irritation, become even convulsed with passion, like an animal of the feline tribe spitting and hissing in its rage. It looked in such moments like a wild cat of the mountains more than anything else; as to compare it to a tiger would be by far too dignified a comparison.

Yet for all this, the face of Sir Simon could smile and look tender upon Grace Bolt; and he was proud to display before her, what, as a country lass, he fancied she liked best to see,—how strong he was, and that he could have broken the heads of all the cudgel-players in the ring with ease, had he not been a priest. The motion of his legs and arms was ungainly, and when he presented his hand in salutation, it was with a twist of his whole body, just as a bear when tamed into civility would present his paw. And as nature seldom works by halves, to a form that was so herculean in limb, muscle, and brawn, she had added a voice not unworthy being found in combination with proportions of such strength and power; for when he opened his mouth to perform mass in his church, it was like the rumbling of thunder; and his sermons were not only calculated to awaken a sinner, but even to waken the deaf or the dead.

With parts and qualifications, personal and otherwise, such as we have described, it was not to be supposed Sir Simon could be so unthankful as not to be sensible of their merits. Indeed, so far was he, good man, from being dissatisfied with his abilities, that he rather, than otherwise, over-estimated them. For he thought there was no person in all the wide world like himself, so richly gifted by nature, so favoured by

heaven, and so sensible of its favours, that he was quite sure happen what would in any matter, he never could be in the wrong. Sir Simon was none of your poor spirited fellows, who could not say boo to a goose; for on a proper occasion he had impudence enough to have faced the dark enemy himself, had he dared to come up from his own realms to question with him in person. Not even St. Dunstan could have been bolder when he took the devil by the nose. Sir Simon was none of your doubters neither,—men who halt between two opinions,—for he listened to nobody's but his own. His temper was naturally so sweet, that he was always in excellent humour when he had all his own way, and all went well to please him. And so far was he from yielding from weakness or modesty, or mistrust of his own reason, that on all occasions of opposition he was as blind as passion could make him; and very malicious where he thought there was nothing to fear; whilst, as for forgiveness of injuries, real or supposed, he never had the presumption to think himself saint enough for any such thing; and so, from his spirit of humility, if once offended he never could forgive.

Such was altogether the very excellent person who, out of pure love to Grace Bolt, had made up his mind to put up with all the scoffs and scorns of the more rigid among both clergy and laity, and to pay the tax into the bargain for becoming a married priest. He had settled the whole thing in his own mind, and some how or other he never doubted hers. Yet, as for Grace, though she could frolic with her playmates, the village lads and lasses on the green, and dearly loved the cellarer, who had petted her ever since she was a child, she thought no more of Sir Simon than she did of my Lord Abbot; but respected him as being the priest of her parish, and that was all. She would often sit and wonder in respectful silence, as he talked what she could not understand, which he frequently did, when he would call in at her father's mill, take a cup of ale, and enjoy a gossip; for Sir Simon at all times opened his ears to it as widely as any old woman in the parish could do.

But as love is never deficient in imagination, it did so happen that Sir Simon was not wanting in this particular; and moreover not being at all mistrustful of his own powers to please, he had most ingeniously construed the silence of Grace into an understood consent to his addresses, and never doubted (as she now and then would stare with her full round eyes upon him, when lost in wonder at the more abstruse parts of

his conversation,) but that on all such occasions she was riveted in admiration of his most rare and eloquent discourse. Not till within the last two or three days, when he called repeatedly at the mill, did it ever enter into his besotted head to doubt his visits were other than agreeable. But somehow or other, self satisfied and self deceived as he was, he nevertheless remarked that in these latter visits, when he spoke some soft things in her ear, Grace turned away from him with a cross and pettish air, and looked as if she did not like it.

These indications of gathering clouds in that atmosphere of love with which the curate's imagination had surrounded his fair one, puzzled his shallow wits; he could by no means account for them; since, having satisfied himself he ought to be loved, he did not doubt but that he was so. When, therefore, the incidents of the day at the abbey came to light, the cellarer's attention in the temptation of the apples, the stroll into the abbot's garden, etc., Sir Simon could no longer hesitate, no longer forbear suspecting, notwithstanding the great difference of their ages, and his being vowed to monastic rule, that the cellarer had become his rival, and that Grace was as fickle as she was fair.

To satisfy all doubt, however, he determined to seek his charmer; but some provoking circumstance or other had intervened all the day long, so that he could not find himself at liberty to execute his purpose till after curfew. In fact, it was so late that the miller had gone to bed, and so had the miller's knave;* and Grace was about to betake herself to rest, when she heard a growling from the watch-dog, stationed in the small court before the mill. She knew the gates were locked, and that, as a wall of some height surrounded the premises, no one could enter. She therefore never troubled herself about the matter, but took the brass bodkin out of her hair, shook her long unbound tresses over her shoulders, and proceeded to pass a comb through them, ere she made any further preparations for going to rest.

Meanwhile the unfortunate Sir Simon, like a vessel of modern construction that is impelled forward by the steam which arises from her boilers within, hurried on, scarcely feeling the ground beneath his feet, till he arrived at the well known gates of the abbey mill; forgetful alike of the hour, and of the curfew bell, which had long since tolled; forgetful of the darkness and the difficulties of the way, and seeing only

* The word knave is here used in its ancient signification, that of a servant.

by the flambeau of jealousy, that cast its own unnatural glare on every object on which he looked, giving a colouring of its own to all things within and without his impassioned mind. In this bewilderment Sir Simon never once thought of the gates being shut, till, fancying they would yield, as usual, to a slight push of his hand, he nearly knocked his nose against them, in the effort to pass on.

This circumstance made him feel that they were locked; but what are locked gates to that power which is proverbially said to laugh at locks and the smiths who made them? "Very poor is the love," thought Sir Simon, "that cannot get over a wall." And, in this tempest of the passions, thought and action being with him one and the same thing, up he sprang, and with the activity of a marmoset scrambling after a nut, gained the top of the wall, and slid down on the other side, never heeding the slight accident of leaving a part of his gown behind him, nor that of the rent he made in his hose, a part of male attire that, in the days of which we write, included more than the stockings.

In the court-yard there was no one at hand but the great dog, and the great dog growled. Sir Simon, emboldened by his rage, never heeded the animal, and was about to give him a kick, but recollecting that the creature might set up a bark and disturb the neighbourhood if he did so, he chose rather the method of conciliation; and so, making himself known to his four-footed acquaintance by familiarly calling him by his name, to which the dog's nicety of recognition gave no denial, the trusty guard very complacently wagged his tail, remained perfectly quiet, and let Sir Simon pass on undisturbed.

Grace had carelessly left the door on the latch, and as her father was a vassal of the Lord Abbot, she frequently broke the law about the curfew with impunity, for she had even now, after the legal hour, kept a light burning within the dwelling at the mill; so that, when Sir Simon walked in without ceremony, she could at a glance discern the discomposure of his dress, his face, and his eyes staring wider than they ever stared before; he looked wild, disordered, almost beside himself with the mingled emotions of jealousy and love. On seeing Grace, Sir Simon exclaimed—

"Oh, Grace! what have you done with me?"

"What have I done with you?" re-echoed the astonished maid of the mill, shaking back her hair, and parting it from before her face with both hands. "Oh, Sir Simon! what

have you done with yourself? You, a priest, to be coming here at this time of the night!—I will call up father.”

“I do not want to see your father; it is you, Grace, who must hear me, or I’m a dead man before the morning. I can’t bear what I feel here,” he continued, putting his hand on his heart. The miller’s daughter thought he spoke of his stomach; and being of a kind and charitable disposition, she very goodnatureedly offered him a cup of caraway waters, as her father’s remedy against the cholic. “Caraway waters to me, Grace Bolt!” exclaimed the unhappy Sir Simon, “to me! and I in the agonies of love—agonies that none but yourself can relieve. You have dealt with me cruelly; you have, you false, deceitful woman;” and then, adding a trope, like one from his own sermons on idolatry, he said, “you have cast down the virgin image of the purest love from its shrine, and have there raised a wanton image instead for your idolatry.”

Grace, quite incapable of comprehending such a flight of nonsense as this (in which Sir Simon had, as he believed, made a figurative application of his own pure love, and opposed it as metaphorically by the fancied dishonourable passion of the cellarer), but hearing, as she did, the words virgin image and shrine, and something about casting them down, she very naturally concluded that she was accused by Sir Simon of the sin of an Iconoclast (though she would not have comprehended it by that hard name), and so, wringing her hands and blessing herself, at the hearing of so false a charge, she called on all the saints above to bear her witness that she never did such a wickedness in all her life. That she never saw an image of the Holy Virgin without kneeling to it, nor a picture of her without kissing it; and regularly set up two candles before her altar on her own day, ever since she was a little child; and furthermore, she told him that she scorned his false words, and would appeal to the Lord Abbot, whose vassal she was, to protect her.

Sir Simon now accused himself of talking to the wench in a way she could not understand, and of wasting his tropes and figures on such ignorant eyes, though they belonged to the pretty head of Grace Bolt; but so angered was she, that it was long ere he could make her comprehend his meaning. At length he succeeded, and once more pleaded his love with all the ardour of the passion. He told her he would make her his wife, and that he meant to pay the tax for her dear sake.

"But I don't want you to pay it," said Grace, very bluntly; "you are not to my mind; I had rather see the back than the face of thee, any day, at our mill."

"This to me, young wench! to me, your lawful pastor!" said Sir Simon with a haughty air, for her bluntness and scorn had roused in him a sense of offended pride, and now spoke the superior, the lover giving place for a moment to the priest. "Do you know, Grace," he continued, with a solemn air, "do you know what are the judgments of heaven against those who treat its ministers with contempt or scorn? Do you know, young damsel, that miracles are called up to punish those who commit such offences? You may, for this contempt of me, be awfully visited, even as the young men and maidens who scoffed at Robert the Saxon, so famous for his prayers. They put scorn on the holy man, by disturbing him with their dancing and singing whilst he was at his orisons; whereupon he straightway prayed to Our Lady and St. Magnus that the offenders might continue dancing and singing during a whole year, and so they did."

"What! without stopping?" said the wondering and alarmed miller's maid.

"Ay, without stopping," replied Sir Simon; "and it was a piteous sight to see how they could not even be suffered to stand still to tie up a garter, or to slip on a shoe, if it got down at heel in the dance: one of the young men took his sister by the hand to whirl her round at the cutting of a caper, and immediately her arm dropped off; and so she danced out her whole year, with nothing left but the stump!"

"Alack!" exclaimed Grace, as she opened her eyes, mouth, and ears, in wonder, at the hearing of such a miracle as this was. And now beginning to fear that she had gone too far in offending a priest, she hung down her head, and tried to cry; but she could not manage it. For not feeling respect enough for Sir Simon to be able to force out a tear of repentance, she made wise to do so, as the good folk say in Devonshire, when they mean to intimate that they are playing off a little deceit, and she now very demurely wiped her eyes with the corner of her volupure.

Sir Simon, seeing her contrition, thought he had produced the desired effect, and that he had done enough for his own dignity. So wishing to blend awe and love together, as the most likely means of governing the female heart, he once more became tender, and tried to soften the flinty bosom of the maid of the mill. Long did he plead, but to all his

impassioned expressions did she remain silent, looking down with shamefacedness, and playing with the corner of her volupure, as a modern and fashionable beauty would with the end of her scarf, when listening to a declaration of love to which her heart has no inclination, but for which her self-interest has something to plead.

At length Sir Simon got on to protesting what he would and would not do for her sweet sake, would she but listen to him. He would get half the parish to send their corn to be ground at her father's mill. He would give her a new blue court-pie, guarded with silver, as fine as that of the reeve's daughter. She should hear minstrels and turgitors, as if she were a baron's lady; she should see the apes and the dancing dogs just come from France, that Queen Berengaria herself had seen and laughed at till the tears ran out of both her eyes for mirth; she should hear the harp and the crota, and even dance round the May-pole, as she did when a girl.

To all these tempting, and not very canonical offers, Grace turned a deaf ear. Sir Simon then proceeded to tell her, he would go a love pilgrimage for her dear sake; and we may here observe that love pilgrimages were at their very acme in the twelfth century. "Oh, Grace!" he continued, "there are few things but I could submit to them for thy dear love, so I might but win it in the end. I could whip myself every night under thy window, as if thou wert a very saint, before whose image I did penance for a sin. And is it not sin to love thee as I do? my idol—my dearest—my ladybird—my mouse!" As Sir Simon pronounced this last pet name of endearment in the very tenderest manner, he ventured to seize on one of Grace's fair hands and to squeeze it, which procured for him a most cat-like completion of his compliment, for Grace, as if by accident, but really by design, as she snatched her hand away, scratched the back of his very sharply with her long nails.

Sir Simon reddened as he felt the smart, but Cupid's was even yet more severe; and so he thus went on: "Oh, Grace! you have become to me like my patron saint, more than my lady-love. I have burnt tapers and said masses for the success of my suit; and have taken you up as my one idea. I see and hear you in every thing. In the very bells that summon me to my duty, I seem to hear but the clapper of thy father's mill. If I look on the white fleecy cloud, as it sails above in the sky, I think straight upon thee, as I have seen thee among the flour-sacks, whitened all over with their dust. All other

women seem but as bran in comparison with thee. Now Grace, dost thou understand me? How I love thee, my very pearl of miller's daughters! the wassail bread, as I may say, in a banquet of delights."

Here Sir Simon was again getting poetical. He stopped, however, in the midst of his flight, and once more came down to homely prose, saying very roundly, "Grace Bolt, can you love me?"

To so direct a question, the maid of the mill gave as direct an answer, and that was, "No."

"Not love me, Grace!" exclaimed Sir Simon, in amazement, "how can that be? Perhaps, you have not seen sufficient of me yet."

"I have seen thee at father's mill every day since Candlemas last," she replied; "and if that is not seeing enough of thee, tell me what is."

"Yes, Grace, but thy father, or thy old grandmother, or thy aunt, have been present, and such company has been an impediment to the endearment of lovers; what talk could pass between us in their company? Now, if you would but consent to let me sit by your side, or walk alone with you every day, for a few hours, Grace, you cannot think how much you would love me at the end of the year."

"Not a whit more than I do now," she replied; "and may be I should hate you for teasing me so."

"Hate me! impossible," cried Sir Simon; "nobody could ever yet hate me. On the contrary, from the very dogs and cats in the house up to the old women in it, everybody loves me, — a man of my eloquence, of my character and calling; whilst to young creatures like yourself, I am as sweet milk or fresh butter. You would love me were I daily in your company alone. Philosophy has long since settled it, that love comes by proximity. Grace Bolt, I see you do not understand me, by the way in which you stare; I will explain in a more plain phrase. Do you see yonder those two joint-stools? Well, Grace, even so as they now stand fixed side by side, they could not so remain, for any length of time, without loving each other in the end; always supposing joint-stools could be capable of the passion of love. Even so should you and I love were we always together."

Somewhat out of breath, or out of wit, Sir Simon here paused in his discourse. But, oh! what was his wrath when, instead of being moved to pity by his figures of speech, Grace, unable any longer to keep her countenance, was so amused at

the illustration of the joint-stools, that she burst into a fit of laughter, so obstreperous as to cause her to shew her white teeth, and to hold her very sides in this overflow of her mirth.

With Sir Simon, however, it was no laughing matter; or if he laughed for a moment, it was like an hyena, that laughs before he flies at a pretty playful gazelle which bounds across his path. He tried to speak collectedly, but his sentences were short, and broken with the bitterness of his passion. His countenance became fierce, his eyes wild, and he almost grinned in his fury, as he said—"Insolent woman, you shall rue this!—I can hate as well as love; and possibly a little better. Harken to me: I suspect you and the cellarer,—suspect you both: there are laws for such offenders. There are appeals to be made, informations to be given, judgments to be passed, and punishments to be inflicted —"

"The cellarer is as honest a man as ever breathed," said Grace Bolt, boldly.

"Curse him!" cried Sir Simon, in his jealous passion, forgetting he was a priest; "name him not to me; for if you do, if you say but a word in his favour, you are a lost woman, though my own soul went to purgatory for the deed. You do not know what I can do: I can be dangerous, and that you may find to your cost."

Grace would have spoken to mitigate his fury, but he would not let her.

"I will not suffer you to condemn yourself," he said; "I will give you time to consider of this matter. I love you, fool that I am to stoop so much beneath me. I love in spite of myself, love you with a fire in my breast that not the torments of limbo itself can surpass in its flames. Thou must—thou shalt be mine; shalt have pity on me. I will give thee till eight o'clock to-morrow morning to think on my proposal: then, Grace, declare thyself, and then are we friends or foes, and for ever. To love or to hate, do thou choose. If thou wilt love me, I will adore; if thou wilt hate, I will revenge."

So saying, without staying to hear a word in reply, with a violence of manner and of gesture which indicated frenzy, did Sir Simon quit the miller's maid, and left her to settle her resolution as she best could with her own stout heart.

CHAPTER VI.

You are meek, and humble mouthed;
 You sign your place and calling, in full seeming,
 With meekness and humility: but your heart
 Is cramm'd with arrogancy, spleen, and pride.
 You have, by fortune, and his highness' favours
 Gone slightly o'er low steps, and now are mounted
 Where powers are your retainers; and your words,
 Domestics to you, serve your will, as 't please
 Yourself pronounce their office; I must tell you,
 You tender more your person's honour than
 Your high profession spiritual.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE Chapter-house of Tavistock Abbey, of a more recent date than many other parts of the edifice, was circular within; of a light, lofty, and graceful style of architecture, which, together with the pointed arch, was first introduced into England at the time of the Crusades. There were in this chapter thirty-six stalls, wrought of stone, within the walls, overarched, and decorated with the richest carvings. In the centre arose one slender reeded pillar, which, branching from the top, into regular arches, formed a vaulted roof of the greatest beauty. In form and elegance this tall and shafted column, with its sprouting branches above, might be compared to the palm-tree of the East—the palm so uniform, yet so graceful in its uniformity, that it may not inaptly be designated as the architectural among trees.

The windows of the chapter were in the Pointed style, very narrow, and filled with small diamond squares of plain glass, that admitted unobstructed the light of day. But these colder portions were surrounded by a border of rich stained glass, and on the top of each window appeared, in the same glowing materials, the arms of the patrons and benefactors of the house.

It was in this beautiful apartment that Abbot Baldwin, on the morning after his arrival, prepared to meet the archdeacon, in the full ceremonial of his order. The abbot was attired in

his alb, robe, and cope, with gloves richly jewelled on the back of the hands; his ring of espousal to the church on his finger; his cross of precious stones depending from his neck, and his low and peculiarly formed mitre on his brows.*

With great dignity of aspect and demeanour, did Abbot Baldwin now advance to take his seat. He was preceded by his cross-bearer, and a chaplain, who bore, likewise, his crosier before him. The crosier was in the ancient form; it resembled a warrior's mace. The train of his robe was borne by Cædmon the Saxon page. His arms were crossed upon his breast, his head rather raised: and as all the brothers assembled arose at his presence, he acknowledged their courtesy by slightly bowing till he reached the steps of an elevated stall, which stood alone on the eastern side of the circle, facing the entrance.

After a moment's pause, he again bowed and took his seat. Then all present followed his example; and the prior and sub-prior both advanced, knelt, and kissed their superior's hand; this homage paid, they returned to their seats; and the Abbot said, with solemnity, "The souls of all deceased brethren and of all believers rest in peace." To which the monks in chapter responded, "Amen."

"Benedicite," continued the Abbot; "and now let us to the business of the day."

No sooner were these forms ended, than, at a given signal, the doors of the chapter were again opened, and the archdeacon and his train were seen standing without. There was a bustle, a stir, something like a contest. The abbot soon perceived that his own cross-bearer, who had retreated after conducting his superior to his stall, was among the throng, and was, in fact, the individual principally engaged in a warm debate with the cross-bearer of the archdeacon, who now attempted to enter the chapter with the same ceremonial as had before been observed on the entrance of the abbot. The words, "Not here,—not to be suffered here," were heard above all the murmurs of the voices in the crowd. "Not here. My Lord Abbot is in chapter. None may advance into his presence with a cross borne before him, whilst he sits here in council, in his own monastery, unless he be a cardinal who comes with the authority of his holiness the Pope."

* All abbots wore the kind of mitre here described; it differed from that of a bishop, or mitred abbot; the latter being allowed to sit in the parliament amongst the peers spiritual. As the Abbot of Tavistock did not receive a grant to take his seat amongst these till the reign of Henry the Eighth, Abbot Baldwin could only wear the common mitre.

"It is my Lord of Exeter, who visits in the person of his archdeacon," said the cross-bearer of the latter, as, with a fierce look, he attempted to pass forward, in no very gracious manner. "Know your duty, and give way to the power of the bishop."

"No such power passes here," said the officer of the abbot, and lowering his cross, and using it like a halbert, he barred the entrance in a way so as to render the passage of his rival impossible. "You come not here with the raised cross of Exeter: this abbey is exempt."

The dispute was likely to be warm between the officials. Abbot Baldwin kept his seat whilst it was carried on with the most unmoved demeanour, till the archdeacon, seeing no possible means of making his entry but by violently dislodging the opposing cross-bearer from the station he had assumed (where, if the truth must be told, he held his sacred emblem as a bar to the way, with as little respect as, in our days, the keeper of a turnpike would bar the road with the gate closed, till a dispute about the toll might be settled), bade his own cross-bearer stand back. On this the other instantly raised his symbol of abbatial authority, and let the proxy of the bishop pass forward, followed only by his train of chaplains and clerks.

"My Lord Abbot," he said, as he addressed Baldwin with a look of defiance and a bow of respect, "this is not well. Did I come hither as Alberic, sometime a simple monk of Abbey Le Bec,—did I approach as such into your presence, barefooted, with a discipline in one hand and the penitential rule in the other, and so crawled to your feet to beg a benison, it would not be too humble for me in my own person. But, mean though I may be in myself, not so am I in my office. I come hither, Abbot Baldwin, in the name of my Lord Bishop of Exeter, your diocesan, to whom you owe obedience; I come on a visitation respecting the rule of that house over which you bear sway. In shewing disrespect to me in this mission, you shew it to my Lord of Exeter; and to him, therefore, will I make my appeal."

"We hold ourself and our house exempt from his authority," said Baldwin; "but, inasmuch as it respects our own honour that we should receive with all courtesy whatever matter my Lord of Exeter would propound to us, we will not deny you the audience you require. Speak freely, reverend archdeacon: we will hear the bishop in your person as a suitor, though not as a master; and therefore is it that his lordship's cross could not, in this chapter, be borne before his archdeacon."

"Proud Abbot," said Alberic, "this assumption will not pass. Your house is not exempt; it is amenable to the power of the bishop, and that it is so you may be made sensible of to your shame hereafter. There are many grievous charges that my lord hath against you, of which I here present you the written schedule in this scroll. You are accused, as abbot, with having your own private seal, with which you have signed away certain lands appertaining to this abbey, for your own profit, and to the grievous injury of the house."

"It is a false charge," answered Baldwin; "I have not so done. I did but sign away a part and parcel of land that the old Lord De Dunsford coveted, as it adjoined his own. I made it over to him for the wisest purpose, that it should return to the abbey with a tenfold interest, even with the estate to which it thus became annexed, at its owner's death. A wise thrift was such a gift, I trow; else had the old Lord De Dunsford's nephew claimed the estate as his heritage, and so it would have been lost to the church; for the young man cares not for cowl or mass. He would not give a mark to have a mass said, or a bell rung, for a dead uncle's soul. But now will the old Lord De Dunsford enjoy our small parcel of ground whilst he lives, have the benefit of our prayers when he is dead, and we of all his lands. What other charge have you against us? for we would fain have the scroll opened to its utmost limits," added the speaker in a tone of scorn.

"My Lord of Exeter charges you with having taken upon you to interfere in affairs of an episcopal nature. You have granted sundry licenses for wedlock within prohibited degrees of kindred; as in a case of marriage between cousins of the sixth remove. You have enjoined a public penance on the wife of a secular priest: a matter clearly beyond your power. And you have also taken upon you to grant letters of indulgence for the erection of certain chapels and cells within the diocese, without warrant of my Lord Bishop."

"To charges such as these," said the Abbot, "I have but one answer. The times are not those of such easy manage, that we may let them run their own accustomed course, and either do, or delay to do, till the exact forms and ceremonies of every matter may be observed. These are times of extreme necessities, and such must be met by extreme measures, often above rule, though not contrary to it. Is it contrary to rule, when a house like ours is called upon to furnish such store of arms, of steeds, and sums in gold, for these wars in the East, that, rather than oppress our poor vassals to raise them, we

make the rich furnish them, by sale of licenses and indulgences granted at their own suit, for which they pay nobly? And shall we not put to open shame a woman who has become the wife of a secular priest! because it is shrewdly suspected that the Lord Bishop of Exeter is disposed to view such offences with too great lenity, and therefore lets go by the offenders? We will suffer no such practices within the bounds of our own domain."

"But you suffer some that are worse," said the Archdeacon. "I came to your town but yester even, and this morning have I received information of a charge most solemnly preferred against one of your house, for conduct that I should blush to name. The secular priest here, Sir Simon, the curate, charges one Thomas, a monk and cellarer of this abbey, with having, contrary to rule, and at the suggestion of the great enemy of mankind, admitted to private conference, and that, too, within his own cell, a woman, the daughter of your own miller! The sub-prior, Sir Simon also accuses of being a party to the transaction, having full knowledge of the fact."

The Abbot looked round with astonishment. "How!" said he to the sub-prior, "what charge is this? Send for the cellarer; call him hither. This matter is one which it becomes our authority to correct. In good sooth it were a scandal to our abbey to let such go unchastised."

The sub-prior, who had his own reasons for not being at all over anxious that he should be made an accusing party against the cellarer, would, had it been possible, have stolen out of the chapter to prepare Brother Thomas for his defence; but such an escape was not admissible, and a chaplain was forthwith despatched to summon the accused.

With no inconsiderable feeling of alarm, the cellarer drew near the seat of judgment; heard the charge, and would have flatly denied it, had not the sub-prior been called upon to bear witness to the fact, by Sir Simon himself. Finding, therefore, that to tell the truth was the least dangerous course in such a strait, the cellarer most heroically determined at once to speak it. As he was mustering up courage to begin, Sir Simon, who had accompanied the archdeacon to the chapter, stood forward with wrath imprinted on every line of his face, for the hard-heartedness of Grace, who had finally denied his suit, had converted all his tender flames into those of hatred and revenge; he now, therefore, charged the cellarer with his supposed offences to his teeth.

In reply, Brother Thomas stated, that he had known Grace

Bolt ever since she was born ; and having been accustomed to play with her from her childhood, she still appeared as a child to him : he was very fond of little children, and having also an earnest wish to talk to Grace, for the good of her own soul, about the vanity of her dress and some other follies, he admitted that he had sometimes given her a ghostly lecture in his own cell.

"Enough," said the Abbot, "enough ; the cellarer confesses his offence. What says the sub-prior?"

"My Lord Abbot," he answered, "I do not deny that I caught the maid in question concealed in one of the towers of your lordship's private gardens."

The archdeacon gave a start, raised his hands, shrugged his shoulders, brightened up, half smiled, and then shook his head, like a man who feels he ought to seem pained and surprised by a piece of information, over which he inwardly rejoices, as it is calculated to injure another with whom he is at issue, and is of a nature to lessen the estimation of that opponent at the very moment he appeared to stand so greatly above him.

But the Abbot was not a whit humbled ; with the most unmoved air he merely said — "In my garden ! who dared to conduct her thither ? I will know."

"The foul fiend, doubtless," replied the Sub-prior ; "the fiend who ever tempts woman to do that which she is forbidden, and who, by awakening in this silly wench an idle spirit of curiosity, as she has confessed, led her, after quitting brother Thomas's cell, into the Lord Abbot's garden."

"This may be true, but it cannot exculpate the cellarer," said the Abbot ; "wherefore should the damsel come to his cell ?"

The cellarer could but protest what he had before protested, his innocence of all offence in the matter ; but this satisfied no one. The archdeacon looked with an air of triumph as he unrolled his scroll of offences against the Abbey of Tavistock, and pointing with his finger to each item, shrugged his shoulders, and talked apart to his own chaplains, whilst they listened with that air of grave attention as if they were a jury called upon to deliberate before a verdict was passed on the evidence of the case. The brothers were uneasy in their stalls ; some rose, many gathered into knots, as their voices were heard in subdued murmurs, and by the echoes of the vaulted roof produced a buzzing sound, like a chorus of bees in a hive.

The cellarer wiped his brow in the heat that had been produced in him by perturbation of mind. Sir Simon, the curate, grew vehement in his exclamations for punishment on the offender. The sub-prior seemed to be in utter despair of making any impression in favour of the culprit; when, with an air of dignity, the abbot at length arose, waved his hand to indicate his wish to speak, and this he did thrice ere anything like order could be restored. Silence, however, once more prevailed in the chapter; and scarcely had the word ordeal passed the superior's lips, when the whole assembly, as with one voice, exclaimed, "The ordeal! the ordeal! let the cellarer have the benefit of the ordeal."

"Of red-hot iron," said Sir Simon, coming up to him on the right hand.

"Of boiling water," said the Archdeacon, advancing towards him on the left.

"Of hot pitch or molten lead," said the Precentor, as he also drew near the condemned.

"Or of cold water by immersion," said a chaplain hard at hand.

During these several nominations of ordeal, from which, according to canonical rule, the cellarer was at liberty to make his own election, he stood between the proposing parties, looking first at one speaker, then at another, with a most dismal countenance, his head turning from side to side as if it moved on a pivot, eager to catch at any word that might be spoken likely to propose a mitigation of the cruel sentence from which he had to choose. But as neither hot iron, molten pitch, boiling or cold water (and the last was that kind of ordeal by which he must risk drowning), were at all of a nature to suit his taste, or his skin, which being smooth and sleek with good cheer, was none of the hardest, he was sorely puzzled which to choose. He would at once have named the cold water had he been able to swim, but he doubted his power of floating, and he had not, perhaps, altogether that confidence in his own innocence which, considering his perfect integrity of purpose respecting Grace Bolt, and the supposed unerring correctness of ordeals, he ought to have felt at such a crisis. He now gave a rueful look of appeal to the sub-prior, as much as to say, "Can you do nothing to help me out of this dilemma?"

The look of appeal being made to no unfriendly person, was answered by the sub-prior saying, with much gravity,—"All here seem to have forgotten the solemn ordeal of

bread and cheese. None is more fearful, as, unless the brother who attempts to swallow such in ordeal is as clear in his innocence as yonder noon-day sun, he is sure to be choked. How say you, brother Thomas, will you venture on the ordeal of bread and cheese?"

"Most willingly," replied the Cellarer, with alacrity; "that is an ordeal allowed only to holy men: it becomes, therefore, as a test spiritual.* The bread is sweet as the manna of the wilderness, and the cheese hath a smoothness in it that resembles the olive oil of Judea, or the anointing unction of holy priests and kings. I seem already, in proof of my innocence, to feel it going smoothly down my throat. I do at once decide for the ordeal of bread and cheese."

"Had you not better take time to consider of it, brother Thomas?" said the Abbot; "you may prefer a more impressive ordeal—the red-hot iron balls, or boiling water."

"By no means," replied the Cellarer, "I never was skilful at handling a ball in all my life, hot or cold, I ever let it slip through my fingers on my toes; I could never clutch it. And as for boiling water, I never could abide it; it vexes too much the spirit within me, for I, being a man of peace, like not to be put into hot water, which so unpleasantly brings to mind the discords of this vain world."

"The boiling pitch, molten lead, or cold water, are equally at your discretion," said Father Alberic.

"Many thanks, most worthy archdeacon," replied the Cellarer; "but my discretion leads not to any one of them! Boiling pitch and molten lead are ordeals more especially belonging to the Stannary courts, where they pour them down the throats of miners and Jews, who are suspected of foul play with the purity of our tin. And as for the cold water, it is in nowise decorous, seeing it is an ordeal fit only for old wives suspected of witchcraft. No, most worthy archdeacon, I, a poor monk of the rule of St. Bennet, am for none of these. I have no ambition in ordeal, none that might make me eminent in story. Therefore will the ordeal of bread and cheese be quite honourable enough for such a poor simple man as I am; and for none other will I give my voice."

"Be it so, then," said Abbot Baldwin; "it is one in accord with conventual rule."

"And quite orthodox," said the Sub-prior; "and there are many sorts of cheese to choose from."

* The ordeal of bread and cheese here described, was allowed only to monks and friars.

"There are," said the Cellarer, "and I would furthermore request to have permission to take my own choice; and to be indulged with a slice of my Lord Abbot's. It is from the dairies of the good wives and thrifty housekeepers of Cheddar; and being especially reserved for my Lord Abbot's table, it must have about it that odour of sanctity which belongs to no other compound of coagulated cream."

"You shall take as much of it as you may desire, Brother Thomas," said the Abbot, "and welcome."

"Nay, good my lord, with your permission, I will take the whole," said the Cellarer, "as a matter to meditate over before the day of ordeal."

And so saying, without further ceremony, the cellarer made his exit; and having the consent of his superior for what he did, nothing out of heart, and being no less strong in body than in innocence, he walked direct to my lord's kitchen, tucked the much prized cheese under his arm, smiled till his full round cheeks lifted their muscles so high as almost to close his small twinkling eyes, so great was his inward satisfaction, and thus retreated with the future ordeal of heaven's justice to his own snug cell.

The first thing he did was to deposit the cheese in his cupboard; then, in order to guard so precious a dainty from an unhallowed theft, he took from it a few crumbs, and set the mousetrap at a particular spot, whence he had found a quick-scented little nibbler had often sallied out to make an attack upon the choice bits and dainties of his secret store. This done, he sat down; took a cup of his own wine to drink joy to himself for the easy manner in which he had escaped in chapter; and as we have already stated, that when under the influence of mirth he was particularly musical, he commenced quavering the snatch of an old hunting song, till at last he might be said to crow in his melody like chanticleer himself in his morning matins, so great was the joy of his heart on this lucky day. But we must leave him and go back to the chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,
As full of peril, and advent'rous spirit,
As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud,
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

SHAKSPEARE.

At the moment we return to the chapter, we find my Lord Abbot and the Archdeacon carrying on a stormy debate, far more in character with the quarrels of the turbulent barons of the period, than with the settlement of any question about the church. Every eye was fixed upon the speakers.

"You refuse then," said the Archdeacon, "to answer my Lord of Exeter touching these matters in charge against you."

"I deny the power of the bishop altogether within this house," replied the Abbot; "I acknowledge no authority but that of Rome."

"Your house has no claim of exemption by any bull or charter," said the Archdeacon; "consequently you are amenable to Exeter. Therefore, in the name of the most reverend the Lord Bishop of the diocese, do I summon you, Baldwin, abbot of Tavistock, to appear at Exeter, before my Lord Bishop, in chapter there assembled, on or before the day of the assumption of our blessed Lady, the mother of God, to answer for the facts herewith charged against you, on pain of being subject to the utmost penalties of body and soul that my Lord Bishop may please to enforce against you, even to the penalty of excommunication, if you persist in this contumacy towards his episcopal rule; a contumacy evinced towards him in my poor person, unworthy as that may be in itself, but most worthy as the deputy of my lord."

Baldwin rose in haste, snatched his abbot's staff from the hand of the chaplain to whom he had committed it, advanced some paces towards the archdeacon, raised his head, and with an impassioned look of offended pride, confronted him, holding

forth his staff, as he delivered the following address, with an energy of manner, a resolution of purpose, and a dignity of demeanour, that were altogether most impressive: "I will give no reply to this summons, save that which I have already given, that where there is no authority to summon, there can be no duty to obey."

"This," said the Archdeacon, angrily, "this refusal is more than an offence to the bishop; it is an insult to the king, by whose gracious pleasure the bishop received his investiture; and who willed that my Lord of Exeter should have power over all monasteries within this diocese of the west."

"A temporal prince," replied Abbot Baldwin, "can have no authority to will or to do within the pale of the church. Can we forget the recent evidence of this, in those fearful struggles, those long continued jars, between the late King Henry and the holy martyr St. Thomas of Kent? He did not, I trow, die in vain; and it is our part, for whose service he shed his sacred blood, to look well that we do not betray our cause into the hands of any king, even were he proud and powerful as Pharaoh when he held in bondage the people of God."

"But bethink you," said the Archdeacon, "that the king you thus openly defy, is Richard of the lion heart, the glory of chivalry, the beloved son of holy church; he who quitted a life of royal ease, a pleasant land, an easy sceptre, a kingdom at home, to seek dangers abroad,—to wield, amidst the arid sands and burning suns of Palestine, the lance and the sword of battle, to rescue a tomb—the tomb of the Lord of life, from foul and infidel hands. O Jerusalem! Richard is thy champion!—the liberator to whom thou lookest with hope amid thy tears; and yet here is one, and he, too, a Christian and a priest, who would treat with contempt the authority of such a prince."

"It is false," exclaimed Baldwin, irritated by the turn the archdeacon had given to his words: "I said not so; I spoke but of Richard as a temporal prince, having no power over persons spiritual, who are amenable but to God in heaven, and to his Holiness on earth. When I stand here in vindication of my own independent right, did Richard come, armed with the chivalry of Palestine, with all his honours, like a star of that East whence they have derived their lustre, glittering on his crest, I would not fear him. No, did he come with an unsheathed falchion in his mailed hand, with all his lion heart

roused into fury by the passions of a blinded rage, I would meet him with as stout a heart, and a stomach high as his own. Armed with no fleshly sword, but with my abbot's staff, I would remember Becket; how he met Henry face to face, and hurled upon him, and all who took part with him, the thunders of the church. Even so would I defy Richard, did he raise but a finger of authority against me, Baldwin, as abbot of this house. Even so do I defy the power of Exeter, now before me in thy person: and here, in the presence of this chapter, which I call on to witness to the fact, I make my appeal to Rome."

At these words, the superior drew from his bosom a written parchment, sealed with his own seal, and making a sign to a monk who was one of the assembly, he approached, knelt and kissed the hand of the abbot, as he received from him the appeal to the Pope. At the sight of a reference made to a power so august, all the chapter rose and bowed in token of respect, for all held in awe the very name of the father of the apostolical christian and catholic church.

"I have herewith declared my purpose in chapter," said the Abbot; "I shall without delay despatch my chaplains and messengers to Rome. Say as much to your bishop, for mine he is not. Say I have made my appeal of exemption from all episcopal jurisdiction; even as did the abbots of Battle and of St. Alban's, on a like account, to Pope Adrian of blessed memory; and I doubt not his Holiness, who now holds the keys of St. Peter, will be no less good lord to me than Adrian was to those abbots, and will grant me as ample a bull as I shall require at his hands."

"Proud abbot," said the Archdeacon, "is this a time, when the good King Richard, who, after his defence of the holy sepulchre, has fallen into such a strait as to be prisoner to his worst enemy,—when England is torn asunder by manifold foes, by miseries numberless, till, like a mother against whom rise her own children, she bleeds from every vein in the wounds of civil strife;—is such a time as this one for churchmen to quarrel, and for pride to gain the mastery? It is not well, casting all authority aside, I tell you, as brother to brother in one calling and one faith, that in the garment of the church you have made a grievous rent. Oh! how would infidels rejoice, did they know that we send forth our lion-hearted king, the flower of our nobles and our chivalry of England, to win an empty sepulchre from their hands, that we may but regain it to bury therein the peace of the Anglican church; and ere our temporal swords are well sheathed, to draw them anew in the evil spirit of a rebellious pride."

The archdeacon wiped away the tears that started to his eyes as he spoke. "I see," he continued, "all the misery that will result from this contest with my Lord of Exeter. Would I could mediate; but you are stubborn, and think yourself certain of success in this matter against my lord. Be not too certain; remember, the shaft does not always fix in the mark to which the eye directs it. Be ruled in time: let me mediate between you. Blessed are the peace-makers. Think of the peace of the church!"

"I must not on that account sacrifice the freedom of this abbey," replied Baldwin; "I shall abide by my appeal."

"Farewell, then," said the Archdeacon; "I see all I would do to mediate is vain. I will therefore take my leave, praying that the decision of his Holiness may quiet these angry jars. And though I will not do other than part from you in peace, yet my duty to my Lord of Exeter demands that, as I pass your threshold, I shake off the dust of your rebellious house from my feet."

"Such may be your duty to your bishop," said Abbot Baldwin; "but it suits not with the hospitality of our abbey that you go hence with an unbroken fast. You shall not depart our gates till you have partaken of our refection. It is near the hour. In the interval, let me pray you, most venerable archdeacon, to rest a while in the guest-hall, where we will speedily join you. For this chapter, we here dissolve it: the brothers may depart."

The formalities and ceremonies of breaking up the chapter were speedily concluded. The archdeacon with his train retired to the guest-chamber, the monks dispersed. Abbot Baldwin remained alone, as he was often wont to do, to make notes in his tablets of any thoughts that had occurred to him during the sitting, respecting the business of the day. He now did so in the matter of his proposed appeal to Rome.

He drew forth his book of fine ivory leaves, made his notes with the utmost deliberation, and was about to retire, when he thought he heard some one stir behind him. He looked round and perceived a small door, which led to a long gallery from the abbot's apartments, move. It was slowly opened, and a figure issued from beneath the low arch, somewhat unusual in such a place: a man equipped in the defensive armour of a knight. He wanted only the lance and triangular shield.* He was clad in a coat of chain mail; to the

* These pieces of armour, on account of their great weight, were seldom carried by the knight himself, unless when in action, being at other times borne by his pages, or esquire.

long and close sleeves of which were attached gloves, also of linked steel, that covered his hands to the fingers' ends; they were as flexible as those made of leather. Indeed, from the smallness of the rings of which the chain armour of the twelfth century was composed, it was in no way an impediment to the action of the limbs; whilst, from its high polish, it reflected the light on every movement of the body, even as water reflects the gleams of the sun at every undulation of the wave. His legs and feet also were completely covered by this close-fitting mail. On his head was a flat-crowned steel cap, to which was attached that part of the armour called the gorget; it protected the throat and chin: to this cap, in time of battle, was affixed a piece of armour to guard the face, formed of iron bars in front, through which the wearer could see and breathe: it was called the *aventaille*.* The surcoat of this warlike figure (of crimson silk richly embroidered, but stained and worn), was girt round the middle by a leathern belt, fastened in front by a buckle of gold. On his left side he wore a sword, the blade of which was straight, and the handle in the form of a cross. A small and richly inlaid dagger hung in his girdle.

This armed figure, whose sudden appearance so surprised Abbot Baldwin, was tall and stately; indeed, the warrior dress he wore seemed calculated to make him so appear, even had nature done her work in a manner less striking; but she had formed it in one of her noblest and most beautiful moulds. His countenance was youthful, manly, and commanding. The upper part of the forehead and the lower of the chin were hidden; as the small square aperture left by the cap for the face (all the rest being covered by the gorget fastened to the steel cap at the sides of the head) allowed only the more prominent features, and the upper lip, to be seen. The eyes, dark and penetrating, had in them a glance that indicated an impatient and a haughty spirit. The expression of the whole countenance was, at this moment, perturbed.

As Abbot Baldwin hastily inquired who he might be that thus strangely and suddenly came into his presence in a manner so unwonted, and in so unusual a place, the armed figure eagerly replied, "Do you not know me? can a mailed coat and a cap of steel thus alter a man, that his friend need ask his name?"

He approached nearer: Baldwin started. "Holy Mary!"

* The *aventaille* was first brought into use by the crusaders during the holy wars in Syria. See "Monumental Effigies of Great Britain," by the late C. A. Stothard, F.S.A.

he exclaimed, "Henry de Pomeroy! Can it be?—impossible! He is even now with the Earl of Mortaigne."

"He was with the Earl of Mortaigne," replied the stranger, "but he is no longer so; he is a fugitive, like the hart that flies before the hunters and the hounds. Henry de Pomeroy now stands before you, a defeated man!"

"And the Earl of Mortaigne?" said the Abbot, with an eagerness that scarcely allowed him to draw breath. "What of him,—is his cause lost?"

"Not so, I trust," replied Henry de Pomeroy; "not lost, though the bark of his fortunes is fast driving towards the rocks. The Earl of Mortaigne seized the castle of Windsor. Philippe of France, in secret, aided him with money and men-at-arms. I joined him. We might have defied all assaults, had the Baron de St. Lo kept faith with us. But he came not, as he had pledged his word to do, to man the castle with a sufficient force. In the meanwhile certain friends and adherents of the captive Richard besieged Earl John in this stronghold of Windsor. We held out till the fear of famine compelled us to yield. At this juncture, our envoy, in returning from Philippe, being taken prisoner, betrayed certain letters to the victorious friends of the king. By these they learnt the truth; and without pause denounced John, Earl of Mortaigne, a traitor to his brother Richard; for hitherto John had made some matters of quarrel between these bold barons and himself a pretext for seizing the castle. But all was now changed: all who had proclaimed themselves his partisans were dealt with by the severest measures. Many were even hanged by these proud and triumphant barons. I escaped with the prince, who is now gone to Nottingham, there to join his power; and hither am I come to bear these tidings of mischance to his friends in the West."

"Does your purpose end thus?" inquired the Abbot, with a peculiar tone and air.

"No," said Henry de Pomeroy; "it has a larger aim. I come to rouse the friends of the Earl of Mortaigne, both in Devon and in Cornwall; to raise men and means; and once more to hold ourselves prepared for the moment when John, with a bold hand, may seize that sceptre which his brother has so recklessly thrown aside, like a bauble, from his grasp. This is my purpose. I arrived but now; and desirous to communicate these matters to you alone, I sought Cædmon, your Saxon page, and prayed him to guide me where I might gain speech with you in private after your chapter. I have now

told you all. These are times that demand action. We must not slumber when the lion is about to be unchained."

"Never," exclaimed Baldwin, "never shall Richard again put his foot on English ground!"

"Truly you have no cause to love this crusading king," said Henry de Pomeroy; "he has been no good friend to you."

"An ingrate!" exclaimed the Abbot; "he has been to me like the frozen viper, warmed in the bosom it requites with its sting."

"Did you not," inquired De Pomeroy, "offend the deceased King Henry by taking part with his rebellious son? I have heard men report as much."

"The quarrel was unnatural," said the Abbot. "I did but seek to shield him from his father's wrath. He loved me; and then was I to Richard even as David was to Jonathan; we two were as a double bosom owning but one heart. I toiled for him, served him, suffered for him; and how, think you, he requited my pains?"

"By making you, by his influence, abbot of this house; was it not so?"

"It was. But was that, I trow, a fitting requital to me?—to me, who looked to be Primate of all England! But I was passed over, and another Baldwin chosen in my stead.* This is an insult never to be forgotten. No more of it; let us talk of other matters. I have here a list" (he drew forth a scroll as he spoke) "of those who are thought to be friends to Prince John. These we must secure. Men and means must be found; the stout cattles of the West must be ours; and then shall we be ready to meet all occasions of necessity. We heard that, previous to this last contest, you and Prince John had a hot battle with the friends of Richard."

"It was with William de Stuteville, who led on the power of the archbishop of York," said Henry de Pomeroy. "The contest was brief, but manly. Our men stood like a tower in the depth and strength of their ranks; whilst their winged arrows flew so thick and fast, that the very face of heaven was darkened with their flight: where they fell they fixed; a life was struck by every shaft."

"Where was the Earl of Mortaigne?" inquired the Abbot; "was he in the battle?"

"He was in its very heart," replied Henry de Pomeroy.

*The abbot probably alludes to that Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, who died at Ptolemais during the Crusades.

"John, with his falchion in his hand, that day made his passage through all opposition. The lightning, when it darts from the cloud, is not more fierce or sudden than was his spirit. Now he was seen leading on the van, till he met his foes face to face; their very aventailles struck in the closeness of the encounter. The horses they rode seemed to understand the conflict, to strain at the curb that held them back, as their expanded nostrils and reared heads shewed their impatience for the fray. The prince brought with him victory. At one part of the field where all seemed lost, with but the waving of his pennon he turned the fortunes of the battle."

"He is a brave prince," said the Abbot; "he shall want no aid that we can give him. Have you the letters that I sent to you at Berry Pomeroy Castle, ere you ventured on this business?"

"I have," replied Henry. "I have thought upon their contents; their counsel to me seems good and wise. You say she is heiress to her dead father's lands in Normandy and England; that a kinswoman purchased the wardship of her from the king. This is well—but is she fair and young? and——"

"She is fair as the lily drooping on its bed," answered the Abbot; "for so would a minstrel sing of her; she hath, too, that most excellent spirit of meekness, which in woman is so precious. Her kinswoman, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, keeps her much from the world. She is as a flower in the shade, on which the sun has scarcely looked with an ardent eye. She were worthy to become a prince's bride. I know well her guardian, who keeps the fair Adela, for that is the maiden's name, more like a votress in a cell, than as an heiress inhabiting her own castle. Yet will I contrive that you shall meet; for I have much influence with the Lady Alicia; and when once known to her fair charge, the Lord of Berry Pomeroy, young, débonair, and brave, need not fear a denial to his suit!"

"I will not fear it," said the youthful warrior; "and trust me, Father Abbot, if I win her by your aid, I will not be ungrateful. I have influence with the Earl of Mortaigne. Once let his partisans, of which we are not the meanest, place the crown on John's head, and your own shall soon bear its augmented honours, as a mitred abbot among our peers!"

"And Exeter, that proud bishop, shall no longer insult our power," said Baldwin, "by asserting any right of rule over this house. But I must leave you, for even now does his

archdeacon wait for me in the guest-chamber. There join us. But you must first seek Cædmon; bid the Saxon page conduct you to a chamber near my own. There disarm; attire you in a less warlike habit; these mailed trappings might excite some spirit of curiosity at such a time. There are abundance of tunics and gowns in the wardrobes of my chamber. I will despatch Cædmon to the Lady Alicia, to request permission that I may bring with me a noble friend to hunt upon her lands. Her young charge delights to witness such sports. This hunting will surely lead the way to your becoming known to her. We shall meet anon in the refectory—till then, farewell!”

So spake the Abbot ere he retired from the chapter-house; Henry de Pomeroy lost no time in obeying his directions, and went forthwith to seek the page who had already privately admitted him, and to whom he was now to be beholden for a civil dress, suited to his rank and the state in which he moved.

CHAPTER VIII.

Great chere made our hoste everich one,
And to the supper set he us anone;
And served us with vitaille of the beste;
Strong was the wine, and wel to drinke us leste.

CHAUCER.

THE hostrey, or guest-hall of the abbey, was a noble chamber: on each side were seen a row of pillars supporting the arches of the carved oak ceiling. The furniture was costly; it had been chosen by the present abbot, who, in whatever appertained to his person or his dwelling, was splendid and sumptuous. The richest hangings decorated the walls; and the tapers that at night were burnt in this apartment, in sconces of silver, were perfumed with ambergris and cloves.

It was here that the archdeacon, his train, and Henry de Pomeroy, were waiting a summons to the refectory. The latter had changed a military for a civil habit, and wore a rich dalmatic of Genoese crimson silk over a tunic of green; its ample folds were bound round the middle by a rich belt; and as he advanced with a graceful step into the room, the drapery of his long and purple robe shewed on his tall and stately person to the greatest advantage. The robe was embroidered with silver stars, and fastened on the left shoulder with a fibula, or brooch, of emeralds and gold. His boots were short and furred; and round his head he wore a chaplet, or circle of pearls, that confined the hair, which, according to the fashion of the time (a fashion so severely reprobated in the sermons of the clergy), was suffered to grow long, and fall flowing over the back.

It was in this chamber that the hosteler met the guests, and gave to each the Benedicite and the kiss of peace. Soon after he conducted them to the refectory, where the abbot intended to entertain the archdeacon with all the ceremonies and solemnities of his house. The refectory was a long and rather low chamber; short and massive columns supported the roof; it was but feebly lighted by the small round-headed windows

of its primitive construction. A stone pulpit projected from the north side of the wall, where the reader appointed to lecture during the repast always took his station. At the east end, above the paneling of oak, was seen a large and rude picture representing the crucifixion. Within the doorway, on the left hand, was an almery, or poor-box; and there, also, stood the grace cup;—a cup so called on account of its being handed round to every monk, immediately after the grace, as the finishing draught of a meal. In some religious houses, where the superior was particularly indulgent, it was often long ere the rap of the Prior's hammer upon the table called for the finishing goblet of the day.

We have somewhat dwelt on these curious customs of our ancient monasteries, because few of our general readers can have the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with them; and if those who chance to know more than we do of the subject, should find such notices impertinent, we can only recommend them to resort to the very common practice of skipping; when, a few pages passed over, they may follow the narrative in unbroken succession. Few readers, however, will object to the items of a good dinner. We trust, therefore, that none will do our abbot such discourtesy as to refuse to accompany him to the social board.

Baldwin entered the refectory bareheaded, his arms crossed upon his breast, with an air of modest dignity in his deportment, combined with the ease of one accustomed to high society, who is about to do the honours in his own house. He was attended by several of his chaplains, and four youths; two were pages of the *digitus*, the other two of the covered cup. As he entered, all present rose, and remained standing; till after having first saluted the cross, the abbot proceeded to the *digitus* at the side table, where the pages whose duty it was ministered to him, whilst the prior poured from a silver ewer perfumed water into a basin of like material, and presented to him a napkin to dry his hands after the ceremony of ablution.

This done, he advanced to the head of his own separate table, to which he had invited the archdeacon and Sir Henry de Pomeroy. The prior and sub-prior presided at the long tables appropriated to the monks. On a signal being given, two of the singing chaplains advanced to the foot of the abbot's board, and sang the Latin grace.* The grace was led off by

* A ceremony still observed at the tables of our colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

a few notes struck by the precentor, on an instrument he held in his hand, and used as the moderns do the pitch-pipe in a country church. This instrument, called a *tabula*, was of bone, ornamented with gold and silver, in form not unlike the ancient lyre; indeed the office of precentor, or chanter, in the monasteries, seemed to answer to that of the Coryphæus, or leader of the choruses, in the ancient drama of the Greeks.

On the abbot's table were several loaves of wassel bread, two of which only were allowed for use, the other four being allotted to the poor. There also stood the orthodox jug of single beer, and the modest half sextary of small wine. But these humble liquors, though strictly enjoined by rule for an abbot's table, were, like the hundred hobnails presented in our times to the Lord Mayor of London on the day of his inauguration, a mere ceremony of office, more for shew than use. In earlier ages, the being able to count the century of nails, proclaimed that the individual chosen for the civic lordship was possessed of sufficient education to enable him to perform the duties of his place; as an alderman who could not tell that two and two made four would never have been deemed efficient to calculate what might be due to the account of justice, when fines, amercements, and penalties, paid down in hard coin, constituted the laws of reparation, as well as of punishment, in most cases of ordinary offence, and even in some of a criminal nature. But notwithstanding, by the progress of time, the constitution of the realm and the entire state of education have changed in this country, the custom of the hobnails, though no longer necessary, is still duly observed in the ceremony of making a Lord Mayor. Even so was the jug of weak beer and of still weaker wine retained, as the ancient and ordained potations befitting a Lord Abbot. But as the indulgence to partake of better things depended solely on his own will, our abbot was content with the mere presence of the humbler liquors, without drawing upon them for use. In fact, he held them as a commander holds his troops in times of peace, to be always ready at the roll call, to answer to their names, but without any intention of leading them into action.

Abbot Baldwin, though he liked good cheer when he had no deep schemes under immediate consideration to spoil his relish and injure his digestion, was by no means a selfish man in any such matters. He did not, therefore, deny that indulgence to others which he granted to himself. Yet let not scandal assail his memory with any undue suspicions on this head. The monks of Tavistock were really no toppers: they

were allowed a social but not a solitary cup; and the cheerful was never suffered to degenerate into the intoxicating bowl. If it did, now and then, by any stolen indulgence become such, the offender never escaped unpunished. In such cases he had either a severe taste of discipline awarded to his back, or he was imprisoned in the monastery, or he had his hood and frock turned wrong side outwards, so to be worn during many days; an ancient mode of punishment for drunkenness still retained among our old soldiers and sailors, by having their coats turned, at Chelsea or Greenwich Hospitals.

The potations that flanked those of ceremony, already named, were as various as they were excellent; they consisted of clary, metheglin, piment, and vernage, a mixture of wine, honey, and spices, and the still richer hippocrass. Two windows in the refectory opened from the great kitchen, and through these were served the meats, hot and hot, to the tables.

No sooner had the dishes appeared, than the officer, called the *particularius*, cut up the food into a commons; such being the allotted portion for one monk; but to the novices and scholars were given a pittance, which was nothing more nor less than an allowance for two lads on one plate; a circumstance by no means favourable to the justice due to a growing boy's stomach, if he happened to have in his fellow commoner* a youth stouter, and more active in the play of the fingers than himself, with better grinders and a larger swallow.

The dishes now served were by no means indifferent; for no monastery in the West could boast better cooks than our Abbey of Tavistock; and though the fare was capital at all the tables, that served to my Lord Abbot's, for its variety and *recherché* character, might have figured in the carte of a modern Parisian restaurateur.

Yet we must here observe, that spiritual persons, according to strict canonical rule, were permitted to eat of no four-footed thing; because God had cursed the beasts of the earth on the fall of Adam. But, with truly nice discrimination, indulging themselves in a little quibbling with the courts of heaven, even as the gentlemen of the long robe do with those of the law, the worthy monks had considered that as in this curse the word earth had been introduced to distinguish those animals that walked upon it from the winged inhabitants of its neigh-

* An ancient name for one who is accustomed to eat with another, from one trencher or plate, in convent or college.

bour element, the air, the creatures of the latter were not to be held as excommunicated from holy stomachs. Hence arose the reprobation of four-footed things, and that most unrelenting war which the brothers of conventual rule never relaxed against ducks, geese, swans, and all manner of feathered fowl: tili, at length, finding a larger variety of food was necessary for a large fraternity, and that many choice creatures, fat bucks for instance, ran on all fours, they got over the canonical scruple by introducing an indulgence on the plea of necessity; so that, at the last, it came to this, there was no necessity at all to observe the rule, except whenever they might be so disposed.

But we will not follow up this subject. We will not intrude on the province of Mrs. Glass; though, as that celebrated book (which, notwithstanding the brittle name of its pseudo author, has had so long an existence) is said to be really the work of a bishop, we might plead even episcopal authority, were we disposed to give a chapter on ecclesiastical cookery. We shall, however, content ourselves with saying, that among the good things at the abbot's table was one that made a great shew—a fine, fat, roasted swan, in Jew's chains, which was nothing less than the bird being hung with pork sausages; so designated in derision of that people, who would rather go to prison than eat swine's flesh in defiance of their law. There were also the cold baked meats, that Hamlet talks about as decorating funeral feasts; and every possible variety of pastry, creams, sweetmeats, and perfumes.

And all this Abbot Baldwin called his poor fare, as he welcomed the archdeacon and his guests to his poor house; and glancing his eye round the refectory with a look of proud humility, he bade all be seated at the conclusion of the grace; and the refectioner rang a small handbell at the warning of what was called the charity; namely, that each monk was on this day to have poured out to him a cup of hydromel at the commencement of his repast. The word was given, and now Cædmon, the reader of the day, ascended the stone pulpit and opened his book.

Still he had to wait till silence should prevail; for, at present, there was all the clatter and commotion attending a numerous body of men dining together in hall. And the servants and obedientaries were still running about, presenting to each brother a super tunic to save his frock and the nappery from the spoonfuls of soup and rich gravies which might be spilt in being carried from the plate to the mouth. Greatly

will our readers wonder when we tell them that these super tunics, through which the monks poked their arms and tucked under their chins, were not unlike the garment the good little people, in our schools or nurseries, have so carefully put upon them before sitting down to dinner.

There is a solidity of purpose about Englishmen which makes them always intent over a good thing. Hence is it that, unlike their neighbours the French, they are no great chatterers at dinner. But in the monasteries, as there were a good many services within the church, and silence was absolute after complin, they were more apt to talk at their meals than are in general the natives of these isles. Abbot Baldwin, however, found such a perpetual gossiping, which not unfrequently resembled the gabbling of geese, or the buzzing of bees in a hive, a great let to the reader (who sometimes read the learned abbot's own compositions), it not a little annoyed him, and more especially when he had guests at his own table. He determined, therefore, to give a check to their loquacity by enjoining that, on all days of especial ceremony, the worthy brothers should be permitted to talk only in Latin; a permission that put the curb upon their satirical jestings, their stories to provoke laughter, and their gossipings, as effectually as if they were under the severest penance in discourse.

At such seasons they were also enjoined to express their wants at dinner by the use of what was called the *signa necessaria*, or, literally, the language of signs, which was a sort of short-hand talking with the fingers. Thus, on these peculiar days, if a monk needed some fish, he waved his hand like the tail of a fish in the water; and if he wanted a slice of venison from my Lord Abbot's board, he was to hold up his two fingers, on either side his temples, to denote the horns of a deer. It was surprising to see how many brothers were eager to put forth this sign on venison days in the refectory. Indeed, so many and so various were these signs, that it was acquiring a language that resembled the manual exercise to learn them.

Whilst the repast was proceeding, the chaplains, called the monitors, from their duty being to report to the abbot or prior whatever they observed amiss, ranged from table to table, and gave a shrewd eye to the novices, pages, and scholars.

Before the reader commenced his task, the abbot, as a matter of courtesy, prepared to go through one of the highest ceremonials of the day, that of the covered cup (for his was

the only one allowed to have a cover); the youth who was the cupbearer ascended the daïs (or raised platform on which stood the superior's table), knelt before the abbot, gave the cover to his fellow page, and after reverently kissing his lord's hand, presented to him a goblet filled with the choicest wine. Baldwin took the richly chased and sparkling cup, and with an air of dignity, bowing as he named his guests, pledged the archdeacon and his friends. After this the cup was presented to each, with an air of profound respect, by the pages of the daïs.

All being seated, and all having drunken a draught, the business of dinner was seriously commenced; whilst Cædmon read aloud from a curious history, which he had composed on the authority of the ancient chroniclers of the house: "A true and faithful Narration of the Foundation of the Abbey of Tavistock, by Orgar, Earl or Heretoge of Devon; and the curious events connected with the Court of that most noble Earl; also, how the Abbey was burnt by the Danes, and built again only thirty years after its original construction."

Cædmon having gone through his reading, the abbot struck the table with the palm of his hand; on which signal, a little page, son of a noble Norman, advanced and knelt on the step of the daïs, ready to fulfil his pleasure. It was to send a cup of wine to the reader. Cædmon descended from his pulpit to receive it; the abbot again struck the table thrice to denote that dinner was ended and the grace might be sung. Once more did the precentor and the chaplains step forward to perform their duties.

The abbot now rose and pronounced the benediction. The spoon officer was already engaged in going round the tables and collecting the spoons, assisted by the cellarer; and according to the rule, the former took especial care to hold my Lord Abbot's spoon in the right hand, and all the rest in the left.

In the midst of this bustle, and before the abbot and his guests had quitted the daïs, there was a stir at the end of the hall that arrested attention. The servant of the locutory now came forward and announced that certain pilgrims were at the gates, demanding admission; and that the janitor (who, according to rule, was to be a "wise old man"), had left them standing without the wicket, till he should know his lord's pleasure, as it was past the hour for admitting strangers.

The abbot directed that they should be let in, and declared his intention to receive them himself. Previous to their entrance, however, the hosteler came to make his report. He

said that some of the strangers were pilgrims of an ordinary sort; they had been as poor sinners to the shrine of St. Thomas-à-Kent to look upon his cloven scull. He had ascertained this at a glance, by observing that they wore round their necks the Canterbury bells; that jingled like sheep-bells wherever they went; and none but St. Thomas's pilgrims might put them on. Others were on their way to the blessed well of St. Maderne, in Cornwall; and of one, who came alone, he knew nothing except that he had a grey-beard, and must therefore be an old man. He was, to be sure, a palmer; for he carried attached to his bourbon, or pilgrim's staff, the branch of a palm-tree. He had merely stated to the hosteler that he came hither on his return from the Holy Land, to offer his bourbon and scrip at the altar of the abbey church.

"He must be then originally of this parish," said the Abbot; "or he would not make such an offering here. Marshal him hither; we would gladly hear the news from Palestine, and how matters stand in the Holy Land, since the capture of our king."

CHAPTER IX.

Around his form his loose long robe was thrown,
And wrapt a breast bestow'd on heaven alone.

BYRON.

An oath is a recognizance to heaven,
Binding us over in the courts above.

SOUTHERN.

THE hosteler soon returned, conducting the company of pilgrims. The palmer came last and spoke last; for were it age, or timidity, or both combined to depress his spirits in the presence of strangers, he was heard to sigh deeply, as he bent his knee before the Lord Abbot, and seemed to shun rather than to seek notice. This was the more remarkable, as palmers in general were apt to thrust themselves forward, and to be eager in assuming that importance which was then ceded to the traveller who returned from such far distant lands.

The other pilgrims easily satisfied the inquiry of the abbot. One had been to Rome to see the Veronica, or sacred handkerchief, impressed with a portrait of the Lord of Life, as he had wiped his face with it, when on his way to Calvary. Another had visited the church of St. John of Lateran, which had been built by the Emperor Constantine after his baptism. The rest were returning from the shrine of St. Thomas-à-Kent, except one, who came to offer, at the altar of St. Rumon, a statual taper. This was nothing less than an immense wax candle, the weight of a child that had been stolen by the wandering beggars from its parents: the unhappy father hoped by such an offering, accompanied by his prayers, to propitiate the saint for the recovery of his child; and for this purpose he intended also to consult the mystical waters of the holy well of St. Maderne, in Cornwall.

All these individuals had been so willing to disclose the purposes and motives of their pilgrimage, that the reserve of the palmer became the more remarkable, and did but fix the abbot's attention more exclusively upon him. The superior was curious to know who he was, and whence he came.

The palmer was a tall man; clad in a sclavina, or long gown of woollen cloth. His scrip hung across his shoulders; he was girded with a leathern belt, and a scarf was thrown carelessly over his gown. On his broad-brimmed pilgrim's hat (usually worn turned up in front, though not so with him), he displayed not merely the well known scallop shell, but what was called a sign of Sinai also; that was a relic from the Holy Land. In the present instance it was a small piece of wood, said to be a portion of the tree under which our Lord had seen Nathaniel, "that Israelite without guile." We fear scarcely so much could be said of the fabricator of the relic, whoever he might have been. A rosary of amber beads, and the bourbon the palmer carried in his hands, surmounted by a branch of dry and withered palm, completed his equipments as a devotee from the Holy Land.

There was something noble but sad in the expression of his countenance; the features of which, though worn and altered by change of climate, and that still greater change, perhaps, produced by the passions of the soul, must in youth have been eminently handsome. On an attentive consideration of his countenance, he might be said to be more old in cares than in years. And as at this period both clergy and laity had renounced the wearing of beards, they were seldom seen on the chins of any, but very poor persons; the grey beard, therefore, of our palmer might serve not only to disguise him, but to indicate he was a man of very mean condition.

On being questioned, he admitted that he was a native of the parish of Tavistock, where he desired to offer up, and to redeem for a small sum, his bourbon and scrip, in gratitude for his safe return to the land of his birth. But on being asked his name, he replied simply, "Walter the Palmer."

"No other!" said the Abbot, in a tone of surprise; "for this can alone have been yours since you became a palmer."

"Walter of the Plant Wormwood, may it please you, then," said the Palmer; "for by that name was I known till I gained the palm by visiting the tomb of our Lord."

"You are a pilgrim of sorrow, then," said the Abbot, for at the date of our narrative it was common with persons going on pilgrimage, or to the Holy Land wars, to assume a *soubriquet*, or penitential name, as it was called, altogether suppressing their own. Motives of humility and repentance sometimes led to this, as a disguise to their rank and station, and sometimes it was a matter of convenience, if they were labouring under any circumstances that rendered a temporary obscurity

desirable for their affairs.* But though these *soubriquets* were not at all uncommon, they were so when assumed by poor people, who, having no rank or state from which any merit could be derived by its being laid aside for awhile, and who, being too insignificant and too obscure to be pursued by any enemy as far as the East, had no motive for disguise. That the palmer was poor might be inferred from his long beard, and the very coarse materials of which his dress was composed. The abbot's curiosity, therefore, was greatly excited by all the circumstances we have named, and he still further pressed on the stranger to declare himself.

The palmer, without giving any answer, laid aside his staff, bared his right arm, and shewed that he wore, soldered upon it, an iron ring of some weight. All present crossed themselves at the sight, in token of respect to the vow of penance which this ring so fastened, indicated had been made by the wearer, from some secret motive, in the name the most sacred to the Christian church.

"I am under a vow, holy father," said the Palmer. "Before the blessed sepulchre itself was I vowed never to reveal my name, my family, my degree, or the one great purpose for which I live and breathe; never to suffer this iron, so painful to the flesh that bears it, to be struck off this arm, till I have visited in deepest humility, and have performed an enjoined penance, at every one of those holy places to which I have bound my soul in my secret vow. Thus much I am at liberty to speak. The visitations to which I am sworn will detain me for some time in the neighbourhood of this abbey, though I must have no fixed home. I must visit, ere I quit the West, the Mount of St. Michael, and one place more; after which, reverend father, I shall be at liberty to tell my name and lineage. But till such time comes, I rest me Walter of the Plant Wormwood, an unhappy man, vowed to penance for his sins; a poor but true servant of the church. Having spoken these things concerning myself, I have nothing more to add."

"The blessed Virgin forbid that we should do other than respect your vow, holy palmer," said the Abbot; yet we may, without infringing it, require of you the news from Palestine. We pray you to rest your weary limbs; sit, pilgrim, sit; the

* Geoffrey of Anjou, the father of Henry the Second of England, on assuming the bourbon and the scrip, to go on one of these incognito pilgrimages, had taken, as his name of penitence, that of a lowly plant, the *Planta-genista*, or *Plantagenet*, or the broom; a devotional name which stuck to his posterity, till it became a proper one, and was, therefore, afterwards affixed to the blood royal of England.

hosteler will speedily bring in the basins and water for the Maundy. As wayfarers and pilgrims from a distant land, it is our duty to wash your feet, holy men. But we will grant ourself a dispensation this evening from the performance of our duty; and our brother, the cellarer, who is under sentence of ordeal, shall be our proxy. Let the cellarer be called hither to wash these good men's feet; you shall not lack a cup to refresh you after your journey; and we will order the *consolatio** in our own chamber. There we invite you, holy palmer, and as many of these pilgrims as would rather partake with us, than with the brothers. You, most venerable arch-deacon, have declared your purpose of going early to rest; we will not, therefore, require your company. But you, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, are a young man, and care not, therefore, to close your eyes at the hour the birds fold their wings; we therefore invite you; and we doubt not that the intelligence we shall gain from Palestine will much cheer and delight both you and us poor recluses, who live within our melancholy cells, shut out from all the vain pleasures of the world we have renounced."

The palmer, two or three of the pilgrims, and Sir Henry de Pomeroy, accepted the invitation; and at the hour of the *consolatio*, the abbot found his private chamber strewed with fresh rushes, the board laid on tressels ready for the repast, and his servants about to spread the nappery and to bring up the dishes. All was soon ready; and Baldwin welcomed his guests as one by one they saluted him with an air of dignified courtesy, that well became him as abbot of the house.

* The *consolatio* was a private supper in the abbot's apartment.

CHAPTER X.

This rash, romantic war,
Begot by hot-brained bigots and fomented
By the intrigues of proud designing priests:
All ages have their madness, this is ours.

LILLO.

SHALL we look at the group assembled in the abbot's chamber, gentle reader, before we proceed to the matter of their discourse! The picture it presents to our view is striking; it is worth a moment's pause.

There sits the abbot at the head of the board; he has exchanged his dress of state for one of private ease; his air and demeanour are less austere, more pleasing. This is the hour of domestic indulgence without ceremony. Yet even now, his stateliness of carriage being natural to him, cannot wholly be laid aside; and though his mind is in repose, yet is there something in the expression of those quiescent features, and in the glance of that haughty and penetrating eye, that seem to say the passions which have left so strong an impress in their course, do but slumber for a while, and are liable to be roused up on the slightest call of offended pride, to resume their empire with all their wonted force.

Near the abbot sits Sir Henry de Pomeroy; there is in him a luxuriousness of manly beauty in its bloom, mingled with a free and soldier-like air, that altogether would render the young and gallant knight a fit study for a painter who wished to portray an Antony after victory, in his hours of voluptuous ease. His beautiful hair, with its long curled and perfumed locks, his fair forehead, and his looks of indolent enjoyment, being singularly contrasted with the general form and structure of his body and his limbs, which indicate strength and vigour of a more than ordinary kind.

In the finest possible relief, if we may be allowed so to express ourselves, to this luxuriousness of youthful beauty, is

seen the palmer. He stands with his eyes intently fixed upon the young warrior, who forms so remarkable a contrast to his own tall and sombre figure, wrapped in the long and ample folds of his simple and coarse gown; his head, now bare, for he had taken off his pilgrim's hat, is of the most marked description. The countenance pale, the features regular, and though a good deal wrinkled about the eyes and brow, yet not other than handsome; whilst the long beard falling over the bosom, gives, as a beard always does, so venerable an air to the head, that he looks many years older than he really is.

The two or three other pilgrims who are present add to the picturesque character of the group, as they are all persons of a goodly form and mien; and Cædmon the Saxon, the favourite page of the abbot, availing himself of his privilege to be near his lord's person, now sits on a low stool near his feet, and completes the picture.

"Will you take nothing but so cold a cup as one of water, holy palmer?" said the Abbot. "Take a cup of wine,—remember what says the Apostle,—for thy stomach's sake. It will not, I trust, infringe upon thy vow to pledge me in this!" He filled one with hippocrass, and handed it to the stranger.

"I may not misprize such courtesy," said the Palmer. "By my vow I am bound to temperance, not to abstinence. Therefore, holy father, I may venture to pledge you in this fair cup, with thanks for the hospitality of your house. I have not tasted such a draught since I quaffed one of hippocrass in the tents of our crusaders, after we had become masters of Acre."

"You have served in these wars, then?" said the Abbot; "and peradventure we ought to call you Sir Walter of the Plant Wormwood—a knight may be?"

"I said not so," replied the Palmer. "My bracelet of iron must excuse my further answer."

"It must, indeed," said the Abbot. "We spoke without thought of thy vow. But, believe us, we have no idle curiosity. Our arrow was but as the fool's bolt, cast at a venture from a bow drawn in idleness. We will ask but such questions as any man may answer,—the last tidings of King Richard. For such a captive as he of the lion's heart cannot be kept from the thoughts of his people, though he may from their eyes. Have you, in your journey hither, heard aught of him?"

"Nothing but what has been often told," replied the Palmer, "that John, Earl of Mortaigne, the unnatural brother of our brave Richard, combined with his enemies, and supported by the envious and malicious Philippe of France, conspire together

to bribe the Emperor and the Duke of Austria still to detain captive the royal Richard, till his usurping brother may find occasion to seat himself in security upon England's throne. But heaven will not suffer that treacherous brother, that coward heart, to prevail!"

"John, Earl of Mortaigne, is no coward!" said Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as he glanced his eye indignantly at the palmer. "And in my presence no man may call him so, without answering to me the foul scorn so cast upon his princely name."

"Peace! peace! my son," said the alarmed Abbot, who feared Sir Henry's sudden passion might betray more than it would be safe to let out just at this crisis. "Know you not, a palmer, and one having a vow, cannot underlay any man's challenge? To speak thus is, therefore, folly; and yonder good man's grey beard should be his warrant, so that an over hasty word may receive a pardon without more ado."

"He shall ask it, then," said Sir Henry, stubbornly; "he shall ask it. The prince is my friend."

"I am not his enemy," said the Palmer: "I have nothing to do with the quarrels of princes. My vow dedicates my thoughts to heaven; and to heaven, therefore, can I alone pray to set at rest these unhappy feuds, and to restore peace, hope, charity, brotherly love to England, from the princes of the royal blood down to the poorest of her people."

"Well, let us speak of Palestine," said the Abbot, glad to turn the conversation from such dangerous ground. "That is a country I would fain have visited, had occasion so permitted. What news thence?"

"News most sad," said the Palmer: "the infidels, no longer in fear of the mighty Richard, break the truce every hour. Once more are our pilgrims interrupted, maltreated, robbed, murdered. Yet even do the very infidels, who thus profit by the captivity of Richard, deplore it, and do that for the princes of Europe which they are too shameless in their envy to do for themselves; they blush that the brave king's mates in arms can let him lie imprisoned by one of their own Christian faith, and not rise to a man to free him. Their expedition must fall to ruin wanting his aid; even as the body falls into the dust, when the heart ceases to animate it with the purple tide of life."

"No man denies Richard the praise of valour," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy. "He owes his courage to his English stock, but his pride to his own spirit; and that few men can brook."

The Palmer fixed his inquiring eye on the young baron, as he said, "Whilst Richard was free, no man claiming knight-hood dared have spoken as much, unless he set his life at naught. To slander the absent and the unfortunate is not well. Young sir, were the king once more at liberty, your vaunted courage might be but as a quivering flame, that would expire at the very fear of Richard!"

Henry de Pomeroy started up, laid his hand on his dagger, but recollecting who it was who had said this, he dashed the half-drawn weapon back into its sheath, and calling himself petulantly a fool, to be thus angered by a grey-beard, sank down into his seat, and preserving a moody air, scarcely spoke five words to the palmer during the rest of the evening.

The Abbot again endeavoured to direct the conversation to other subjects. He talked of Syria; of the holy sepulchre; the miraculous images and relics: and received such answers from the palmer as shewed he had been an attentive observer of the scenes through which he had passed; and the changes Judea had undergone in the latter ages seemed very forcibly to have struck him.

"I have visited," said he, "that land of majestic memory. With feelings of the deepest awe have I stood where holy men trod of old; where the princes of an ancient people rose, like its suns, matchless in splendour; princes of a favoured line, fearful in their spirit, glorious in their adoption, the chosen of God; mighty even in their shadows, in the memory of their long departed greatness. That land where prophet arose after prophet, and with a voice, as of a trumpet in the wilderness, aroused a sleeping world, proclaiming to the nations the coming of their King."

The palmer looked upward as he spoke; an expression of awe was strongly imprinted on every feature of his face; and his voice became deep and emphatic as he dwelt on the wonders and the sacred character of those scenes, so surpassing all the ordinary experience of mankind. The abbot was struck by the energy of his expressions, and felt that respect for the superiority of the palmer's mind, which makes so strong and so favourable an impression on a man of sense, when such superiority is unexpectedly and unpretendingly brought before him.

Yet, in the midst of his enthusiasm, there was a degree of melancholy in the palmer, that seemed constantly to keep it in check; for after he had spoken with the utmost animation, he would sink into silence and abstraction, till he was again

roused by some question he could not well avoid. The abbot soon observed that melancholy was his principal characteristic; all he said or did was coloured by it, even as a piece of painted glass gives its own hue to whatever objects may be seen through its medium. But though so sad, there was nothing harsh or unpleasant in his manner. The palmer's was evidently the melancholy of a sensitive and a suffering heart, not of a discontented or disappointed spirit; hence was it gentle.

The Abbot spoke of Jerusalem, and said he could almost envy the happiness the wanderer must have felt on first placing his foot on such sacred ground.

"The feeling was too much akin to awe, to be called happiness," replied the Palmer: "a strong sense of the judgments of an offended God seized on my soul as I looked around me on that blighted land. Yet I felt that every thought of man's heart in such a region of the still existing evidences of Divine power partook of its sublimity."

"True," said the Abbot; "for that land is the still existing record of miracle."

"The scourge of God," exclaimed the Palmer, "throughout those solitary plains, has marked with desolating stripes on every rock and vale, that His wrath hath passed over an accursed land. The cities whereof trembled and stood mute, as God's word came upon them, and they fell; and He who would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, yet shook in his wrath the cedars of Lebanon."

"It is even so," said the Abbot; "nothing is left of the once splendid cities of Judea; and only the sepulchres of their kings remain to tell the tale of their departed power."

"When man is no more," replied the Palmer, "how vain are all his efforts to prolong the record of his existence. The names of the tenants of those very sepulchres are unknown. The cities over which they ruled are in the dust, and with the Jews, as a people, all is now a tomb."

"We will speak no more of that unhappy race," said the Abbot: "the subject pains us. Cædmon, hast thou thy harp at hand? A shade of sorrow hangs on the brow of our holy palmer here; and you, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, the dark spirit seems to be with you also. Like Saul, you shall feel what a harp can do to cheer it. Our young David here shall try his skill." Cædmon did so. He took his harp; swept his hand lightly and rapidly over its chords; then, with great art, played a gentle air, and stole gradually into a flow of the

softest and most melancholy music. Again he led into a less pensive strain, till, at length, he gave full scope to the instrument, and rang out such a glorious measure, with all the power of the harp, making its tones speak to the heart, and rousing those who listened to a feeling of life and energy, that the spirit of sadness which had before stolen on the social hour was at once put to flight, and all were so cheered and animated by the skill of the Saxon minstrel, that even the Lord Abbot could not help shewing some outward marks of his inward satisfaction: a strong proof, as he afterwards said, that Cædmon had indeed no equal as a harper.

The strain ended, the abbot filled the cups, and Sir Henry de Pomeroy, now restored to his better humour, smiled as in a significant manner the superior gave the health of the fair Adela de Marmoutier, and might success attend the hunting match on the lands of her kinswoman, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont.

The palmer, who, after Cædmon had done playing, had sunk again into a reverie, on hearing the last sentence, seemed to be suddenly roused to attention. In a moment he bent his keen eye on the abbot and on Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as if he would penetrate their very thoughts. The abbot, who was quite as observing as the palmer, remarked the interest he betrayed at the mention of the young and beautiful Adela. He asked if the holy man might be known to her, or to her guardian the Lady Alicia.

"I was formerly of this county," said the Palmer; "and know therefore that the Lady Alicia de Beaumont is the mistress of Wilsworthy Castle. But so many years have passed since I have seen my native place, that I did not know till this day she was still alive."

"Oh, yes!" said the Abbot; she has lived in the old castle, except when absent in Normandy, ever since the news came of her lord's death, that made her the richest widow of the west. The Lady Adela, her orphan niece and her ward—the wardship purchased of the king—is also the heiress of great wealth. Many seek her hand. But she has been strangely kept from the resort of nobles and gentlemen who would prefer their suit to her: whilst her aunt, the Lady Alicia, studies only how to fit her for a saint; and some think she will at last prevail with her fair charge to become a nun, and to bestow all her immense riches on the foundation of a religious house."

"Such would be a Godly purpose," said the Palmer.

"Yet one that would make all men sigh to think so sweet a rose, as report speaks this lady to be," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy, "should be taken from the world, condemned to perpetual seclusion, and by disclaiming marriage, leave no branch of so fair a tree."

"It were a great pity it should be thus," said the Abbot; "but we have better hopes. It were a good deed, and I speak it openly, — seeing it is a matter more of honour than of mystery, — to win this prize of love and beauty, to win her for a noble youth, such as thou art, Sir Henry de Pomeroy. Palmer, thou shalt not be so moody; thou shalt drink a cup to wish the gallant De Pomeroy God speed in his suit to the lovely Lady Adela."

"I may not taste another cup," said the Palmer; "but I am in charity with Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and with all men, I trust; I will therefore wish that he may speed in every suit that shall be acceptable in the eye of God. And now, Father Abbot, I would crave your leave, for I am weary, and must depart hence at early morn, to pass from this chamber to my place of rest. Give me your benison, and suffer me to depart."

"Holy man," replied the Abbot, "you have our leave, and our blessing. Cædmon?"

"My Lord!"

"Summon hither the chamberlain, and bid him guide the Palmer to his couch. The blessing of St. Rumon and Our Lady be upon your rest."

The Palmer bowed and retired. As he passed on, he asked the chamberlain where Sir Henry de Pomeroy would be lodged. He was told in the chamber at the end of the gallery appropriated for strangers.

"And the archdeacon, where is he lodged?" inquired the Palmer.

"In the chamber next to yours," replied the official.

"I am too much honoured for so poor a man," said the Palmer; "the janitor's cell would have been good enough for me. I am not worthy to be lodged near so noble a churchman."

CHAPTER XI.

O treach'rous night !
 Thou lend'st thy ready veil to every treason,
 And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.
 HILL'S ZARA.

With whisp'ring noise, as tho' the earth around me
 Did utter secret things !
 The distant river, too, bears to mine ear
 A dismal wailing. O mysterious night !
 Thou art not silent ; many tongues hast thou.
 JOANNA BAILLIE.

It was not till a late hour that the Abbot and Sir Henry de Pomeroy retired to rest. When left to themselves, they had discussed with mutual energy those dark designs in which the subtle policy of Baldwin, from motives of personal ambition, and the fiery spirit and ill-directed friendship of Sir Henry de Pomeroy for Prince John, made each take so warm a part, and caused each to play for so deep a stake in the treasonable game that was on foot. Yet, even with men so heedless of the ordinary routine of life, whilst bent on objects of such high aim, nature claimed her dues, and very weariness at last compelled them to seek repose. Soon after, all the house was still.

Nothing now was heard but the "many tongues" of night : the wind that whistled down the large old chimney ; the rushing of the Tavy over its rocky bed ; and, now and then, the baying of a dog, or the hooting of an owl amongst the towers and trees.

The palmer, though he had sunk on his pallet to rest, after devoutly telling his beads, had not extinguished his lamp ; indeed, he seemed in no mood for sleeping : his thoughts were active, and notwithstanding there had been on this evening a settled calm about his heart, it was more the calm which a long habit of self-control can call up at will, than that con-

quest over feeling from a sense of religion, that renders the mind incapable of being assailed by any of the ordinary occurrences of human life.

To support with a manly resolution a destiny which had been one of an uncommon character, to expiate by long and severe penance those things of which conscience had accused him, were the leading principles of the palmer's mind. For the rest, though his cares were sufficient, they were, he had been heard to say, of a nature that may wound but cannot corrode the heart, which is, therefore, though deeply afflicted, spared the bitterness of grief that makes sorrow as a poisoned dart, infecting whatever is most vital in man. Hence was it inferred by the few with whom he had familiarly conversed, that the palmer was a wronged man; one more sinned against than sinning; and that those traits of generosity and magnanimity which so often escaped him, served to prove the injuries done to an individual by another often call forth his noblest feelings in the effort to support them; whilst those a man does to himself, frequently sink alike his moral and his physical being; such is the difference between misfortune and vice. Nevertheless, though we have here mentioned the remarks made upon the wanderer by the companions of his journey, they were but the result of conjecture; for no man knew the story of the palmer's life. Those with whom he had travelled felt an almost instinctive respect for one under so strict a vow, whilst his demeanour, although humble and gentle, was dignified, and even noble. But it is to the cell of the youthful Sir Henry de Pomeroy we must now bend our steps, and must relate what there passed on this most memorable night.

He had not, we fear, told his beads as regularly as the church of which he was a member would have required ere he slept. He had removed whatever might be cumbrous about his dress, wrapped himself in his long and large mantle, and without more preparation, warrior-like, had thrown himself on the couch intended for his repose. But not long had he slumbered when he was disturbed, and fancied, whilst in a dreamy state between sleeping and waking, that he heard something more than the moaning of the wind and the rush of the river, audible as were those melancholy sounds, in the ancient and vaulted chamber where he slept.

He started, looked up, and beheld the palmer standing before him, holding a lamp, and gazing upon him with a countenance marked by an expression so peculiar, so different

to that which had hitherto characterised it, that a sense of alarm was the first of which he became conscious on being thus suddenly aroused from his uneasy rest. Yet it was not such a feeling of fear as would have disgraced one who bore arms; what he felt was an instinctive terror, such as will assail even the boldest heart, and make it shrink and shudder at the sudden appearance of a supposed assassin; even as the firmest man that ever lived may feel a curdling of the blood at the unexpected sight of a viper, if he accidentally meet with it in his path.

There was something so extraordinary in the countenance of the palmer, as he now gazed upon the youth, that, in a very great degree, it justified his fears. The whole man seemed changed; he did not look to be the same as when, with that melancholy and reverend air, he had conversed so respectfully with Abbot Baldwin, ere he went to rest. The lamp the palmer held in his hand, casting its rays of light upwards from below the head, gave an effect to the shadows of the face that was almost of an unearthly character, and the lines of the countenance, which was very pale, when thus seen, looked stronger, deeper than they did before. There was also, in the fixed gaze of his large black eyes, a glowing expression; they darted their fierce glances upon Sir Henry from beneath a cowl which hung as low as the eyebrows over his head, and the mouth, that was agitated with a tremulous action, like a leaf as it quivers in the blast, indicated an emotion too strong to be suppressed. Indeed, every feature seemed to betray the passions and the smothered resentments of a vindictive mind.

Surprised, astonished by the appearance of the stranger at such an hour, and evidently under the influence of such strong and inward emotions, the first thought that darted on the mind of Sir Henry de Pomeroy was, that an assassin had stolen upon his sleep to do him an injury. He sprang up, therefore, and seized his dagger, that lay near his bed.

"What!" exclaimed the Palmer, "do you fear an unarmed man? can this lamp slay you? I have no weapon."

Ashamed of his precipitation, Sir Henry threw down his dagger, and said, "Wherefore am I thus disturbed, and at such an hour, and in so strange a manner? If you have aught to say to me, why not have spoken it ere I came to rest, or have waited till to-morrow?"

"Peace!" said the Palmer, "peace! what I would say, even for your own sake, rash youth, must be spoken in secret.

For, of our conference this night must no man know, and, least of all men, Baldwin, the wily monk. Ere you will be stirring on the morrow, my purposes will compel me to quit these walls. I am not now come with so much danger to us both, for I warn you there is danger in our meeting at this hour, to be questioned by you. Answer me briefly to what I shall propose to you, and fear not."

"I fear no man whilst I wear a sword," replied Henry de Pomeroy; "but who are you who thus address yourself to me in the accents of command? on what authority?"

"On an authority you dare not disobey, should you compel me to name it," said the Palmer. "But rest assured, without further doubt, that the motive which this night prompts me to seek a conference with you, is one whose truth and honesty stands clear in the eye of the living God, before whom no thought of the heart is veiled."

There was a solemnity in the voice and manner of the palmer, as he made this appeal to a higher power, which struck with an involuntary conviction of its sincerity the mind of Sir Henry. He looked up, and in the countenance of his strange visitant he no longer saw the indications of any struggling emotions; they had passed away, and a settled calm once more prevailed in every feature. It was evident that the angry spirit slumbered again within his breast, after having been fearfully aroused by some sudden sting of the passions. Yet, notwithstanding the almost irresistible conviction which a solemn declaration of what is true seldom fails to produce, engaged as he was in one of the darkest intrigues of the day, Sir Henry de Pomeroy did not think himself warranted to promise that he would satisfy the interrogatories of the stranger without having some proof stronger than a mere assertion, that he was authorized to make them. Once more, therefore, did he press on the palmer to declare himself openly.

"It may not be," he replied; "seek not to know me; I should be injurious to you did I linger near you. May be you have yet to learn, for you are young in life and all its sorrows, that a mind ill at ease with itself saddens other minds which come in contact with it."

"It may be so," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy; "but still, to me you are a stranger, and even now you answer wide from the mark; but I am resolved, and ere I entertain further parley with you, I must be better satisfied."

"It must be told then," said the Palmer, in a low voice, as if thinking aloud, rather than speaking to another. "Young sir, know you this token?" He placed his hand within the

folds of his gown as he spoke, and from some pocket concealed under the drapery, drew forth and presented to Sir Henry de Pomeroy a silver spur.

Had the palmer been a magician, presenting to the youthful knight an enchanted mirror, in which the events of a whole life are said at a glance to pass before the sight in their shadowy outlines of fear and wonder, it could not have produced a greater or more instantaneous effect. He started like the affrighted deer roused by the bugle of the hunter; he turned pale as death, trembled, doubted, looked at the palmer, stretched forth his hand, and grasped the silver spur, as he exclaimed in a voice that had in it a tone of awe: "O heaven, my father's token!"

"Ay," said the Palmer, "it was thy father's token; that token on which he gaged a life, and lost it."

"And who art thou, who art now possessed of it? Oh, tell me, tell me! if you have pity on the feelings of a son, tell me more; you who possess that token, you must know the fearful tale of his death—the awful nature of his accusation—the horrid doubts of his innocence—the shame,—do I, his son, do I still live to speak it?—the shame, the dishonour that clings to his memory, unredressed! Give me, then, if it be in the power of man to give it, give me but so much knowledge of the facts as may enable me to do him justice; to clear away the cloud that has darkened the lustre of his once honourable name. Do this, and I will fulfil your bidding, and bless you as my father's friend."

"Thus far have I suffered you to give vent to the feelings of your soul," said the Palmer; "now listen, and mark me well; for every word I utter is of import. How many years have passed since you last saw your father?"

"More than seventeen," replied Sir Henry de Pomeroy; "I was but a child when he quitted England for the Holy Land. Where or how he fell I need not say, since the possession of that lost token assures me all the fatal tale is known to you."

"But how know you," said the Palmer, in a manner the most emphatic,— "how know you this is the true token, seeing you were so young when your father died?"

"The fellow of that spur, which my father retained when he pledged the one you have this night produced as his gage of honour and of battle, is still in my keeping."

"One question more," said the Palmer; "know you the history of this token, long held so precious by your father's house?"

"I do," replied the youthful knight. "The silver spurs were won in fight, by our renowned ancestor, the brave Sir Ralph de Pomeroy, who at the battle of Tours in France, took them from an infidel leader whom he slew, when he seized the crescent, the standard of the Moors. He laid both crescent and spurs at the feet of his commander, Charles Martel: both were restored to the brave warrior, who was long the glory of our race; and as Charles Martel himself buckled them on Sir Ralph's feet, after the victory, he vowed that ever after the silver spurs should be the pledge of honour with all the descendants of his house, and that if any one bearing the name of De Pomeroy should be accused of a breach of loyalty or of good faith, he should instantly give in token one of those silver spurs, and either retrieve it with his honour, pure as the virgin ore of which it is composed, or forfeit his life in the attempt. Now know you wherefore I can recognise the token? It is also of matchless workmanship. At the Castle of Berry Pomeroy there lies the other spur, tarnished and dishonoured, wanting its fellow."

"Thy father lost it," said the Palmer; "he was accused in a point most vital to his honour; he pledged the silver spur that he would disprove the charge in single combat. The combat was allowed: he drew the sword to redeem his pledge, and lost his life in the attempt."

"But I, his son, live to do justice to his memory," replied Henry de Pomeroy; "and though his cruel adversary, who slew him, is now also no more, yet let but a man of his blood, having the heart of a man within his bosom, let him but now aveng my father perished justly, and I will meet him, and never part till one of us bites the dust."

"There spoke the spirit of a Pomeroy," exclaimed the Palmer, surprised into admiration at the gallant demeanour of the young knight in support of his father's honour and his fame.

"Yet one thing I would ask," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy; "how came you by the spur? There is the wonder; for he who slew my father, it is well known to all men, is dead. How came you by such a token?—did you know the man who vanquished a De Pomeroy?—or did you know my father?"

"I did," replied the Palmer; "your father was once my most trusted friend. I—but my vow—did I speak more I should infringe on that. Rest, therefore, satisfied with what I have already said. The time may come when I may be at liberty to speak freely; when mystery shall no longer hang

upon my words, to cloud their import. My vow expires on the eve of St. John's day. It binds me to pass that day in penance at the shrine of St. Michael, in the chapel dedicated to him in the far-famed Cornish Mount. Till the eve of St. John I must say no more. Restore to me then the lost token; and most solemnly do I pledge my word, as a man who has known gentle nurture and the noble strife of arms, that you shall then, if you will, have the opportunity you so earnestly desire to do justice to your dead father's name."

"On these terms I herewith restore to you the token," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as he once more put the palmer in possession of the forfeited silver spur.

"It is a compact," said the Palmer; "I will not fail you. Now will you answer to such questions as, on this night with so much peril to myself, I have sought you purposely to have answered. Will you make reply?"

"I will, and resolutely," said De Pomeroy; "for I have now neither doubts nor fears, but such as my sword must satisfy hereafter."

"Tell me then," continued the Palmer, "is it not your purpose, and as Abbot Baldwin was proud to intimate, at his suggestion, to endeavour to win for your bride the rich Norman heiress, Adela de Marmoutier?"

"It is," replied the youthful knight.

"What know you of her?" inquired the Palmer.

"Nothing more," said De Pomeroy, "than is known to all men; that the Lady Adela is young, good, beautiful, an orphan, an heiress, and ward to her kinswoman the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, the right of her guardianship being purchased from the king."

"Did you never hear," said the Palmer, "that in Normandy, where she was born, there was some mystery about the fair child Adela—about her mother's sudden death on the day of the child's birth?—ay, and that strange suspicions were whispered about a Jewish nurse?"

"A Jewish nurse!—a Jewish nurse to the child of a Christian baron, and he one of the noblest of Normandy! I will not believe it. It cannot be true. It cannot be that a Christian infant was ever intrusted to the care of an Israelitish woman—to draw life from the bosom of one of that accursed race now loathed and trampled on by all the world."*

* At the date of our narrative (when the cruellest persecutions of the Jews were at their height), so great was the spirit of hatred and superstition, that any child (though of Christian parents), suckled by a Jewish woman, would be held as tainted, and unfit to match with a family of any rank.

"Yet are there those in Normandy," said the Palmer, "who will tell you that this lovely Adela has some taint of the blood of Israel, by such a means; that no gentleman would match with her. If you wed her you are undone, a lost, a ruined man."

"What!" exclaimed Sir Henry de Pomeroy, "because some idle tale has gained ground that this lovely creature was nurtured by a Jewess,—in a time, may be of necessity, when the child's mother, who died in the hour of her birth, could not sustain her infant at her own bosom,—shall I be affrighted so as to give up my hopes and my suit? And now I think again, grant that it were true, I might apply to Rome, state the circumstances, and obtain a dispensation to wed by the power of the church."

"It could not be. Oh! there is more in this—more than you may know, or I may tell," replied the Palmer; "but as you value peace and conscience,—as you would have a heart at rest within itself,—seek not this lady. Shun the path that would lead you to the bower of this fair one, or more fatal will she be to you than were the poisoned fang, did you take to your bosom the silver-spotted snake."

"These are fearful warnings—there is some mystery here," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy. "I do beseech you, tell me more? Reveal to me the truth; for there is that in your manner, that will not let me doubt. I do believe you speak on more assurance than the report of idle tongues. Satisfy my mind; give what you so darkly shadow forth, a form and shape, or let it no more appear."

"I must not speak more plainly," replied the Palmer; "yet know, brave youth, marvellous, incomprehensible as it may now seem to you, that on the eve of St. John, when I shall fulfil to you my compact respecting the silver spur, what I shall then reveal touching that pledge of honour lost, will also fully disclose to you those things to which I have but darkly alluded concerning the Lady Adela. In the interval, let not a thought wander towards her; seek her not; expose not thyself to a danger that may destroy thy peace; for all men say she is lovely beyond all compare, pure in innocence, sweet as the summer rose in beauty. Shun, then, her presence, or that beauty may become to thee, as an inauspicious star, thy destiny for evil; she may remain to thee through all thy after-years, but as the dream of thy early life, when all its hopes are dead. Believe me, I speak this for thy good alone; believe me, I am not thy enemy. I am no man's enemy now."

"Yet when I first beheld you, this night," said Sir Henry, "you looked upon me, holy palmer, with a countenance that spoke a tale of fearful passion. What am I to think of this?"

"Think," replied the Palmer, "that there are moments when sudden feelings, called forth by those inexplicable links of circumstance that connect the present with the past, will arise with fearful power within the breast; such feelings were mine when I first, on this night, stole upon thy rest. I looked on thee sleeping, and thought thou didst resemble—no matter whom I remembered—but no more of this. Wilt thou give me thy word, never to seek the Lady Adela de Marmoutier till our conference shall be past on the eve of St. John?"

"Never!" exclaimed Sir Henry; "I will never give a promise that I have no purpose to fulfil. I will see Adela—it may be woo her, win her, wed her. Who shall say me nay?"

"That would I," said the Palmer, "did she stand with her plighted hand in thine, even at the altar's foot. But words boot not. Thou wilt keep the appointed time? In peace, or in war, over land, over sea, through calm or in storm, thou wilt meet me in the chapel of St. Michael's Mount, on the eve of St. John. Thou wilt there maintain what thou hast this night spoken, in vindication of thy father's blighted fame; or thou wilt yield him to have been justly vanquished, slain by the judgment of God; for it was to the judgment of God that he referred his cause in that most fearful quarrel."

"I will do this," replied Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and then, according to the custom of the age in matters of solemn compact, he repeated exactly the words of the other party, saying—"At the appointed time on the eve of St. John, in peace or in war, over land, over sea, through calm or through storm, I will meet thee in the chapel of St. Michael's Mount, and there will I avouch, even at the altar's foot, my father's honour as untainted, and will afterwards maintain the same with lance or sword, in any way of battle."

"It is well," said the Palmer; "and that you may do this without let or hinderance, beware of Abbot Baldwin; trust not that wily monk with the subject of this night's conference. Name me not to him more than as his pilgrim guest. And oh! brave youth,—you, who have so free a spirit to peril life in the defence of a father's blighted memory, do not cast away that life as a thing of little price. You are leagued with dangerous men; with those who will employ you for their own ends, but, when such ends are once gained, will cast you off

even as they would a worn piece of armour that is no longer needed for their use. Whilst, if they fail, be sure of it, the Earl of Mortaigne would send your head, were it demanded, as a peace offering to his brother Richard (should Richard once more return to rule over his own realm), as freely as he would cast the head of the commonest criminal to the carrion birds around the block. His self-love is absolute. Believe me, the ungrateful scruple not to become the betrayer; and is not John an ingrate to his noble brother? Trust no such man. Farewell! keep my counsel, act upon it, and till the eve of St. John, again farewell."

CHAPTER XII.

The careful cold hath nipt my rugged rind,
 And in my face deep furrows eld hath plight;
 My head besprent with hoary frost I find,
 And by mine eye the crow his claw doth write;
 Delight is laid abed, and pleasure past;
 No sun now shines, clouds have all over past.

SPENSER.

From early youth war hath my mistress been.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE Castle of the Lady Alicia de Beaumont was situated at a distance of about three miles from Tavistock. It stood in the midst of a wild but beautiful country: river, rocks, woods, hill and valley, combined to render it delightful. The park for deer, and a thick forest, principally of oaks and beeches, arose to the north of the edifice, whilst in an opposite direction lay several villages, with their ancient churches and monastic cells, over-topped by lofty-trees. The Tavy for many miles here wound its course, forming those picturesque reaches and bends which give such a character of variety to the scene. Nor were there wanting rich meadows and pasture lands, dotted with the cottages of the poor; the sight of which, in a cultivated landscape, never fails to raise a pleasing emotion within the breast, and man feels comforted and cheered by the consciousness that he is in the proximity of his fellow men.

Opposite in character to all these objects of pastoral beauty arose in the distance the lofty and far-extending heights of Dartmoor. The scene, though desolate, was replete with grandeur. Its granite tors, its tumultuous rivers, its wild and soaring birds, its majestic solitudes, and its imperishable records of Celtic antiquity, all combined to give it the deepest interest; whilst under every change, if partially enveloped

in its mantle of clouds, or illumined by the brightest beams of an evening sun, the effects of the moor were always imposing.

A path through the forest we have named, led from the public road to Wilsworthy Castle. The building, though somewhat rugged and sombre, was nevertheless a noble pile. Its most ancient portions were Saxon, plain and massive. There was something in their construction, marked as it was by simplicity and strength, that appealed to the imagination; and the beholder, as he looked on those primitive towers and walls, was reminded of the days of the princely Alfred, when so much of that which was great and noble mingled itself with all the plain and simple characteristics, both public and private, of the times. How different from that condition of government and of society, so soon afterwards brought in by the Norman conquest, when a race of tyrants, the most heartless and oppressive, successively ruled over this unhappy land!

The castle had been erected on an eminence near the Tavy; it was of considerable extent, and surrounded by a fosse, or deep ditch. Before the entrance, or rather drawbridge, was that outer work, called the ante mural or barbican. It consisted of a lofty wall, battlemented, and designed to repel the first assaults of an enemy. The castle itself arose beyond the fosse; its strong and high walls were creneled and battlemented, and six round towers (two of which were on each side of the gateway) were seen flanking the walls. Within the latter stood that range of buildings, of more recent date, which constituted the dwelling, chapel, and offices of the inhabitants. And again within this (the inner bayle, as it was designated), arose, overtopping all, the round and rugged donjon or keep. It stood like a weather-beaten and rough old warrior, who, by the years and services that have passed over his head, has gained the right to watch and to command all the younger and less experienced aspirants to honour and to arms.

The castle gates were of oak, and so thickly studded with iron-headed nails, that they were as a casing of armour to the doors. A smaller door, called the wicket, next the larger entrance, was constantly used, as the great gates were much too ponderous to open on every occasion, and were seldom moved except for the ingress and egress of mounted persons, or on occasions of state. There was an iron grating, or portcullis, which dropped down before the great gates, from a hollow in

the wall above, in times of danger or assault; but on all other occasions it was kept raised, with only its long iron spikes, like the teeth of a shark, to be seen, shewing what fangs were ready to tear the hardy foe, who should but attempt to pass for any hostile purpose within the jaws or entrance to the body of the building. Over the gateway were likewise those machicolations, or openings, through which might be poured down upon an enemy, from the battlements above, melted pitch, boiling water, fire, stones, or any other tokens of salutation likely to check his curiosity, did he attempt to penetrate beyond the permitted bounds.

We here say nothing about the interior of the edifice, with its dismal cells or dungeons under ground, where in most castles, in Norman times more especially, such scenes of cruelty were enacted by many of the fierce and tyrannical barons of the period, that the blood runs cold as the records of such deeds become known to us by our ancient chroniclers.

On the walls of the castle, both by day and by night, the watch paced his round; and on the least signal of alarm being given, the deep-toned bell in the chapel would in a few minutes, call up all the warlike spirits of the fortress, to arm in its defence.

Some thoughts of a warlike nature possessed the mind of Cædmon, the Saxon page, as he drew near the castle, bearing in his bosom a letter from my Lord Abbot to the fair châtelain, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont. Well did he remember that the time had been when his own ancestors were the lords of the castle to which he now approached as a menial, being only saved in his own person from the condition of a slave by the will of another, with whom good fortune, more than his own merit, had rendered him a favourite.

Hitherto Cædmon had appeared to most men but as a quiet and reserved youth, who was bent on his studies, and obedient to his superior, within whose mind no strong feeling slumbered, that awaited but the occasion to give it birth. The world, however, who thus thought of him, were but as the world always are, judges of the surface, incapable of appreciating either persons or motives which do not lay themselves open to the common gaze. The feelings of Cædmon were strong, but unobtrusive; and though he could so far accommodate himself to the circumstances of his situation, that he hesitated not to do the office of a foot-page, and to bear my Lord Abbot's letter, yet not to save his life would Cædmon have submitted to put on, with his commission, the crouching demeanour and

the menial address of a Saxon vassal, who was the servant of a Norman, within or without the church.

Near the commencement of the path through the forest we have named, stood, somewhat apart from the village to which it belonged, a church. Its ancient stone cross arose near the entrance to the churchyard; around its base were three or four steps, that served either as seats for the peasantry to rest or to kneel upon, as they might feel disposed to sit or to pray. Some lofty elms and antique yews, with their sombre boughs, afforded a melancholy shade to the spot thus consecrated to religion—to the services of the living and the dead.

As Cædmon approached, he observed, sitting on the lowest step at the base of the cross, an aged man, whom he immediately recognised as a Saxon named Wulfred, one who had followed the late Lord de Beaumont to the wars in the Holy Land. He had lived to return, and, as he had been a favoured vassal, he was now allowed to end his days in ease and comfort, in a small cottage, on the lands of the Lady Alicia, to whom he belonged (agreeably to the laws of the time respecting the Saxon serfs), as much as did the cattle or the trees on her estate.

Old Wulfred was known the country round, and universally respected. He was, in fact, the village oracle. Men of his own standing (few such remained) would sit with him and hear him discuss, with mutual satisfaction, how different things were now to what they used to be; how much worse the world was grown: there were no such men now as he could recollect in his boyish days; men who resisted to the last the yoke of the Norman conquest, and died when they could do no more.

The villagers, of both sexes and of all ages, loved to congregate around the old Saxon crusader, to hear him tell them tales of the perils he had run, the sights he had seen, and the battles he had been engaged in by land and by sea—as all sat in silent wonder, not unallied to fear, with eyes, ears, and mouths open, as they listened in breathless attention to such accounts. Even some of the higher and prouder classes were not altogether without sympathy for Wulfred. Many a Norman knight, forgetting his prejudices against a Saxon born, would feel some kindly emotions spring up within his breast at the sight of those silver hairs, and that venerable aspect, if he chanced to meet the old man in his rounds; as, with a shaking hand, he would doff his thrum bonnet, and give the noble stranger a *Salve domine*—for he knew as much Latin as composed a Catholic blessing. Even the most thoughtless among

the young and the proud would often, almost involuntarily, rein up his horse, instead of dashing forward, as the worn-out crusader drew near. Some would throw an esterling into his cap, for the sake of the white head that it left bare, whilst he so meekly drew it off; and the placid smile which expressed his thanks had in it so much to call forth pity and respect, that frequently the traveller would look back, as he passed on, after giving his small alms, and would think, though he was himself so much better off in the world than that poor serf, perhaps he should never live to make so fine an old man. Many a title of respect was given him, to which he laid no claim, for some called him Master; all the maidens in the village called him Father Wulfred, and the children, Old Father Wulfred. And above all, with children was he an especial favourite; they knew his haunts and his ways; they knew when he went to mass or to confession; the particular corner of the bench on which he sat when at church, to avoid the current of air from the door—for age and infirmity had made even this once hardy cross-bowman painfully susceptible of the cold blast. All left that seat unoccupied for him, whether or not he went to church.

The children knew also when they might tease him to play with them at fighting the Saracens, and he to be King Richard; and when they must leave off and let him alone. And they never forgot what sort of ash and hazel branches he liked best to have brought to him, when they wanted him to cut them up into lances, or to make them into bows, and string them for their games; and long ago had he instructed them how to cry, "Remember the Holy Sepulchre!" every evening at sun down, as if he had been still in the camp of the crusaders.

As Cædmon approached, he perceived Wulfred sitting, without his thrum bonnet, at the foot of the cross, basking in the sun. Old people and children seldom find it too ardent; like kittens, they love to enjoy themselves or to play in its beams. Two or three little ones were gathered round him; whilst Wulfred, leaning with both hands on the head of his staff, was trying to sing to them an old camp tune, in a tremulous voice, by way of accompaniment to a Saxon glee game they had learnt from his instructions. As he thus sat, his white hairs glittering like threads of silver in the sun, and his hale and ruddy cheek wearing a deeper flush than usual from its warmth, he looked like one whom Time had approached with a gentle hand, as if reluctant to overthrow the manhood of a soldier, who had so bravely, and for so many years, resisted all attacks of the most adverse fortune.

"A good-morrow to you, father," said Cædmon, as he took off his bonnet in token of respect. "You remember, I see, our old Saxon times, even in teaching these children their games."

"Alas! we are all children now, and not men," said Wulfred, looking up with surprise, as Cædmon so unexpectedly came upon him. "Is it you, Cædmon? You seldom come near us, now. Have you, too, left us, for the Norman, like all the world beside? But men, now-a-days, forget every thing, almost their mother-tongue in this new jargon of the French. So that men do not even give the time of the day in a way that a Christian can understand."

"But I spoke to you in Saxon, Wulfred," said Cædmon; "so that reproach cannot apply to me. And for not coming near you of late, I have so much to do in the scriptorium for my Lord Abbot, that I seldom go beyond the walls of the monastery; and there our abbot has restored the Saxon school, on purpose to preserve our language from being forgotten in this new *Lingua Franca*."

"St. Dunstan bless him for it!" said Wulfred. "He is the only Norman I have known who valued the ancient tongue that was talked by our first parents in Paradise, for they spoke Saxon."

"I know they did," answered Cædmon, who had adopted, as implicitly as Wulfred himself, the popular belief of his countrymen, respecting the language of Adam and Eve; but averring that the Devil tempted her in Norman-French: a matter of tradition taught by all the Saxon monks (who loved not their Norman conquerors, and who would have staked their lives upon its truth) to the people.

"And how like you the Lord Abbot and the monastery, young man?" inquired Wulfred.

"Well," answered Cædmon, "as times go. I love well my books; and so I cannot do other than love my Lord Abbot, who has made it my duty to live among them."

"I see how all this will end," said Wulfred: "you will at last become a monk. That fondness for turning monk, and leaving the crossbow, to take up in its stead the crucifix, has been the ruin of our country."

"It has," replied Cædmon. "That grave and godly historian Bede, a portion of whose Chronicle I am now copying for our abbey, laments that the warlike spirit of the Saxons gave way to a too great love of monastic ease; he foretold to what dangers it would lead. And, in good faith, all the most

able men were in cells, and few left to defend unhappy England at the time of the invasion; so that the Norman William had her at advantage. But deem not so of me, Wulfred. Am I not Cædmon the Saxon, the son of Cædmon, the son of Oswy, the red-haired? Can I, think you, look on yonder castle, and forget that I am its natural lord?"

"You are,—you are," said Wulfred eagerly. "But, alas! another has the power now, and the lordship has passed from the right heir to a foreigner and an alien. And how passed—not as other lands have done, but by——" He paused.

"Tell me, Wulfred, I beseech you, tell me all the circumstances of that event. I know not how it is, but though, since you have returned to this place, you have often promised I should learn the story of our unhappy house, you have ever delayed, when I have pressed on you the relation of it. I know little more of my own family than that my grandsire, Oswy, the red-haired, was a Saxon ceorl, the lord of yonder proud castle, degraded by the Normans, but still a thane; till, for some bold act of his, he was cruelly and treacherously dealt with by the powers that then ruled the land. This is all I know. Tell me then the rest: I can bear the truth of my misfortunes; for no coward's heart beats, I trust, within the bosom of Cædmon."

"You were ever a brave child!" exclaimed Wulfred. "Oh, Cædmon! my dear young master!—for by birth and right you are my natural lord, and I your vassal—you know but little of yourself. Listen then to me, and I will tell you all the sad tale, ere Wulfred, the greyheaded old serf, who was born on your father's land, broke his bread at his board, and bore his arms, as his armourbearer to the battle, shall be dead. Yonder is the cottage that now shelters his feeble body, and not far distant is the churchyard that will afford him a little space of earth, when he needs to lay it under the green sward. The day is far spent with me; I have little else to do in this world than to die; and yet to do that well is the principal thing we all have to do here; but I should not die well did I conceal some things from you, and take them with me to lie heavily on me, may be, in the judgment. For if to speak what is not truth be a crime, so is it a crime oftentimes to withhold the truth."

Wulfred, whose mind was not so feeble as his body, was at most times clear, and even energetic when he reverted to the past. A gleam of intelligence came over his venerable face, and seemed to enliven every feature, as he raised his furrowed

brow, fixed his blue eye, in which was seen the gathering drops of feeling, affectionately on Cædmon, and said again—"You were ever a brave child! The Normans, who had swept away many of our ancient customs, had yet spared one by which the Saxons put to proof in their very infancy the courage of their offspring; by placing the male child on the thatched roof of their cottage, and leaving him there by himself for a certain space of time to mark what would follow as the sign."

"Was I so proved?" inquired Cædmon eagerly.

"Ay," answered Wulfred, "and by me. It was I who took thee from thy mother's arms, to prove thee on the roof of my own cottage; where thou didst sit undismayed, never crying or falling; but thou didst laugh and clap thy tiny hands as a couple of birds—they were robins—flew fighting—as those birds will fight, fierce as Saracen and Christian—over thy head; and they gave not over their battle till the one beat the other down upon the thatch at thy feet. The mistress of divination, Thorbiorga, the Saxon witch, passed by at the moment, and she did foretel——"

"What!" exclaimed Cædmon.

"Great things of thee," answered Wulfred; "that thou shouldst be fatal in the day of strife to thy enemies; fatal to thy Norman masters, as the eagle to the weaker birds of the forest in its ire."

"But that day will never come," said Cædmon; "for I am poor, powerless, obscure—little better than a slave. How fell my grandsire Oswy; he who lost yonder castle?"

"You shall hear anon," said Wulfred. "Oswy paid all due tribute in money, men, and arms, to the Norman king, to be allowed to live in his own castle as a degraded thane. I was much about his person, and I soon saw how affairs would go with him, when I observed that though he kept the day of payment, he could not keep his temper; that would break out, and many scornful words passed between him and the officers of the king's exchequer, whom he would call in derision officers of the Jews' exchequer, when they called on him, as a Saxon noble, for the payment of the tribute. Where malice lies smouldering like a hidden fire in the heart, it will soon break out; and so it did now."

"Was it not the sheriff of Devon who accused him of some crime, and caused him to be fined and amerced? I have heard a vague rumour of that circumstance."

"The sheriff accused Oswy," said Wulfred, "of having

been in league with certain traitors at Launceston to upset the Norman rule. Oswy was innocent, but impatient; he refused to pay a fine for an offence he had not committed; he was at last driven to resistance by the way of arms. His castle was besieged; he fought bravely, till from want of food for his men, he could no longer hold out. At length Oswy, as a last effort, made a sally on the besiegers; in his haste to do so, his standard was forgotten. It was deemed an ill omen; but Oswy soon found a way to raise the drooping spirits of his people."

"It was enough to damp their energy," said Cædmon; "no Saxon chief could hope to win a battle under a mischance like this."

"Oswy, however, was not to be overcome even by his own imprudence," replied Wulfred. "The spirits of his followers drooped for want of a rallying point; they had no standard; they would neither shout their war-cry, nor press forward to rout their foes, who, from yonder hill, showered down arrows, thick as hail, upon their heads. They were prepared for flight. Oswy saw this: bearing his spear above his head, and dashing it on his shield for very fury, he rushed among his men; with mail and helmet so glittering in the sun, that the eye could scarcely look steadfastly upon him; he seemed at the moment to be inspired by more than the spirit of man, as he called to his people, in a voice none dare disobey, so high and so commanding were its tones, so strong its entreaty—'What, my followers!' he exclaimed, 'do you fall back? Will you desert me, and abandon my cause, because the standard is not in the field? Is it for want of an ensign of victory that you would now fly like cowards from an unfought field? I will give you then a standard—one from which no man dare fly and hope to live, either in body or in soul. Here is your standard!' And so saying, he leaped on the topmost step of this very cross where I now rest my weary limbs, dashed his shield against the topmost stone, till it rang again to the blow, and said, 'I swear to defend this cross, as the ensign of God's victory, till my arms be torn from my grasp, and my body trampled under foot!'"

"Oh, gallant Oswy!" exclaimed Cædmon, "such an example must have been inspiring."

"It was; it was!" said Wulfred; "a spirit of enthusiasm ran through the troubled ranks swift as the lightning along the cloud in a dark and stormy sky. All rushed towards their leader, shouting as their war-cry, 'The Cross! the Cross! the

Saxon and the Cross!' There they made their stand, and there the noble Oswy bit the dust."

"I can read the sequel," said Cædmon. "My father, then a youth, lost with his father's life all claim to his inheritance; for Oswy had died bearing arms against his Norman masters, the oppressors of the realm."

"The castle and domain, that should have been thy father's, gentle youth," said Wulfred, "were forfeited to the state; and were afterwards bestowed on a Norman baron."

"I have heard that you, Wulfred, fought to the last by the side of my grandsire, and became a prisoner to that very Lord de Beaumont who was in the field against Oswy, and took possession of his castle almost immediately after his death."

"I stood over the body of my slain chief," said Wulfred, "till I sunk under the wounds I had received in the effort to preserve his corpse from the spoilers, who would gladly have stripped it for the sake of the linked mail. I sunk down then in doing my duty at the foot of this cross, where he fell, and therefore can I now kneel upon it with comfort in my age. I did not spare the young head then for the love I bore to my earthly master; and, may be, therefore is it that the old head is protected now by its heavenly Master."

The aged soldier passed his trembling hand over his grey locks as he spoke, as if he would illustrate his discourse by the action. Tears were in his eyes, as he added "Oh, that was a sad day, and a sad fall!"

"And how came you to be spared, when so many were put to death for treason, after the battle?" inquired Cædmon.

"The Lord de Beaumont had charge of the wounded prisoners," replied Wulfred; "he was a humane man, though a Norman baron, one who looked on a Saxon as something better than a dog or a Jew. So he caused the wounded to be conveyed back to the castle; of which he now took possession in the name of the state—they gave it to him afterwards as his own,—and there I lay, grievously sick of my wounds, for more than two months, hanging between life and death."

"But you lived, Wulfred," said Cædmon, "to serve for many a year your new master the Norman baron, as faithfully as you had formerly done your Saxon chief. How did this come to pass?"

"You shall hear," replied the narrator, who liked not to be hurried in his tale. "When I lay on a sick bed, and was like to die, I was a very different man to what I had ever been before. I had been young, bold, and confident, and had

never known till then what it was to be taken down in the midst of my stoutness. How often had I said, that I cared not for the hurts of war, that my spirit should never rue for any mischance that might befall me in battle. But now my proud heart was humbled and brought down with my body's weakness, till I shed tears as fast as drops of rain, and grieved like a girl for the sadness of my fortunes."

"They were changed, indeed, by the death of the noble Oswy," said Cædmon; "I marvel not your spirit was brought low."

"Oh, it was broken, quite broken," replied Wulfred. "I had dreadful thoughts and fancies too, when I lay on that sick bed. I know not if they were real sights of horror, or only the recollection of them. But the vision of this very cross, with the body of my chief lying dead at its base, haunted me by day and by night. In the day it seemed to rise up before me in every corner of the place where I lay. If I fixed a look anywhere there I saw the cross—this cross covered with blood; and if I slept, I had horrible dreams as I lay panting in terror on my straw. I saw the face of Oswy convulsed in its dying pangs before my eyes, as the groans and the tumult of the battle, and the cry of 'The Cross!' that he shouted to his people as they rallied round him, startled me in my sleep; and I awoke with limbs trembling, and heart beating, and the very hair on my head wet with the agony of my dream. And then would I crouch down in my straw, and think upon my sins."

"And yet you, Wulfred, who thus quailed before the power of some evil spirit—for such it must have been—were known for one of the bravest men that ever followed to the field."

"Oh, there is no being brave with God when he visits!" said Wulfred; "for God it was, and no evil spirit, I am assured by what followed, who thus shook me when I thought upon my sins. Amongst the greatest was disobedience—disobedience to a poor, lone, widowed mother. She was a cotter of my Lord Oswy, and I was his serf. It was my duty to labour on my lord's land, and to work in the spot of ground that was beside her dwelling. I was all the world to her; and yet, without being forced to do so by my chief, I left her, and my peaceable way of life, to join the folk at the castle, as bearing a crossbow seemed to me more manly than to handle a spade. I thought not of my mother's grey hairs, nor of her loneliness, when I left her bereft of all comfort, to follow your grandsire."

"But she was well cared for," said Cædmon. "I have heard that the generous Oswy never left his poor cotters to want bread. She must, then, have been cared for."

"Ay, that she was," said Wulfred; "and the last care was soon shewn for her; for she never held up her head after I deserted her. She remained in the same poor cottage, mourning and pining, like a bird that droops rather than lives in the same nest, when its young ones have been carried away from it. She had, however, soon no more need of me, nor of anything else, for she broke her heart with sorrow; sighed herself out of life, and sunk down to her last sleep as quiet as a child to its rest; leaving to me to feel, in due season, as I deserved to feel, all the pangs of her dying. I am, even now, as I was when I lay sick on my straw, and thought upon these things."

Wulfred wiped his sleeve across his eyes, whose tears shewed how young the old could be in feeling, when looking back on past times. At length, he recovered in some degree his resolution, and thus continued his tale:—

"How I thought of my poor mother, and how I was punished for my disobedience to her, you may well suppose, gentle Cædmon, from what I have said of the sufferings of my prison. Hour after hour I lay on my straw and thought of her till I could fancy I could see her; see her with the tears in her eyes, and hear her as with words and tones that made my heart sick to recal them, she begged me to stay with her, and not to go as a cross-bowman to the castle, since my lord would not compel me to do so. And then, I thought, how hard-hearted I had been, and hated myself for it. And I could see her of an evening, in my fancy, as she used to sit at her cottage door, plying her needles of bone to make me, her thankless son, a bonnet or hose. And I seemed, as I thus looked at her in my mind, to sit once more by her side and to listen to her affectionate words, as she would call me the joy of her heart—a joy that broke her heart at the last; and I could see her, I thought, and the very woodbine and roses that grew round the door of her dwelling; and then would I weep to think that now no flower bloomed for her but what was on her grave."

Again did the old man pause; and Cædmon, who felt that deep interest that in a great measure awes whilst it subdues—which the griefs of the old are so sure to convey to a gentle and a generous mind—endeavoured to draw off his attention from a subject so full of unavailing regret; and asked

him, therefore, somewhat abruptly, how he came to take the Cross.

"Oh, very naturally," replied Wulfred. "This cross, on whose base I now rest—where fell my noble master—where I was wounded and taken prisoner—this cross, which served as the standard of our unhappy fray—haunted me, as I told you, day and night, in prison. I saw it everywhere, and in my dream it always rose up before me covered with blood. It was therefore the red cross, indeed, to me. So I vowed a vow in my sickness, that might I but live, and could once more bear arms, I would, to expiate my sins, and obey the evident commands of heaven, petition my Lord de Beaumont to let me follow in the expedition he meditated to the Holy Land. He gave his consent; but some circumstances delayed his going to Palestine, so he sent me thither in the train of another baron before he went himself."

"You were not with him then, when he was slain?" said Cædmon.

"I was not," replied Wulfred. "There were many sad circumstances attending his death; and though he was a Norman, and had possession of the castle that was once the noble Oswy's, and should now have been yours, I could not but sorrow for my Lord de Beaumont, for he was as gallant a leader as ever led a follower to the holy wars. And so humane was he as a master to our unhappy race, that he had obtained the name of the 'poor Saxon's friend.'"

"I would he were still alive, and lord of yonder castle," said Cædmon; "for possibly so brave a man would not have forgotten that in the veins of Cædmon ran gentle blood; probably he would not have denied me, all degraded though I am, the occasion, by meeting him, sword to sword, in contest, of doing justice to the memory of my unhappy grandsire. But this is vain talking; he is dead, and women now bear the rule in my father's halls. I have a letter from my Lord Abbot to one of them. Wilt thou marshal me the way, for I am yet a stranger to Wilsworthy Castle?"

The old man rose to do so, and sighing deeply, as he thought in what manner the young and true heir, for the first time, was about to visit the home of his forefathers, he led the way, with a melancholy spirit, and scarcely spoke till he stood without the castle gates.

CHAPTER XIII.

In peasant life he might have known
As fair a face, as sweet a tone ;
But village notes could ne'er supply
That rich and varied melody,
And ne'er in cottage maid was seen
The easy dignity of mien,
Claiming respect, yet waving state,
That marks the daughters of the great.
SCOTT'S *Rokeby*.

CÆDMON soon found himself within the walls of his forfeited inheritance. He was ushered into a noble Gothic apartment, the hall of audience, where all was so different to the usages of modern times, that we must lay before our readers a slight sketch of the scene.

The hall was lofty; it was principally distinguished by an air of gloomy grandeur, a dark vaulted ceiling of carved oak, and its tall shafted and painted window, formed of richly stained glass, the subdued light of which fell on a floor inlaid with glazed tiles—for even at this early period the latter had been imported into England by the Flemings. The hangings were of the richest tapestry, embroidered by the Saxon dames of the race of Oswy, long before the Conquest, when no nation in Europe could compete with the ladies of our island in the beauty and richness of their needlework.

Several suits of armour, some of which had formerly belonged to another race of men, hung on the walls, with weapons of war and of the chase, and numerous banners, the trophies of many a well-fought field. Beneath the great window stood erect a suit of armour, surmounted by a helmet, with the visor closed; bearing on the left arm the shield, and in the right mailed hand, the lance. This pageant, as the subdued light from the painted glass streamed upon it, appeared with such an imposing effect, to any one entering the

hall from the opposite side, that it looked like an armed knight, who with closed visor kept watch and ward in the apartment. The entire suit had belonged to the late Lord de Beaumont, and when thus seen, it had altogether so much, not only of his height, but of his very air, that in the dusk of the evening it caused the timid and the superstitious to feel a shudder pass through their veins as they looked upon it; it stirred the imagination as a thing ready to start into life, or as the ghost appeared to Hamlet, like a "spectre in arms." The stools, tressels, and tables, that constituted the furniture for domestic use, were of the richest carved oak, adorned with embroidery; and at the end of the hall were, as usual, perches for the hawks; birds used for falconry, and very often carried by their masters on the wrist, within doors, and always when they rode forth to the field in pursuit of their sports.

The chamberlain and house-steward, the former carrying his white wand, like a master of the ceremonies, and the latter having the badge of the family embroidered on the breast of his tunic, conducted Cædmon with every mark of respect into this hall, as soon as they learnt that he came on a message from my Lord Abbot to their lady.

Cædmon, in whose manner and address there was all that grace which the refined feelings of the poet and the gentleman seldom fail to convey, paused as he entered, and made his obeisance to the noble ladies in whose presence he now stood. He was struck with admiration, and scarcely knew which he most admired, the majestic Lady Alicia, in the full maturity of womanhood, or the lovely Lady Adela, in the bloom of youthful charms. With the former, the character of her beauty was commanding; she was neither young nor old, but very fair:—

"For Time had laid his hand so gently on her,
As he too had been awed."

She was attired in a gown or tunic of green; a rich girdle of jewels bound her waist, and her embroidered robe fell from her shoulders in long and ample folds. Her *aumôniere* (a small pouch in which she kept money for the poor, and the altars of saints) depended from her left side; on the right was a rosary; a collar of jewels encircled her throat; she had bracelets of the same; and a caul of gold network covered her head, and secured her veil. Nothing could be more rich than this attire, or more eminently handsome than the widowed châtelain by whom it was worn.

The Lady Adela was attired in a very similar costume, but more simple, having on her head only a chaplet of roses, and wearing her hair according to the fashion of the period with girls of her age (a fashion revived for children in our own time), in two long plaits falling over her shoulders.

The ladies were seated at a table, where lay their materials for needlework, hawks' bells, tassels, and lures, Adela's lute, and the fool's gilt bauble; the last named emblem just before Cædmon entered, having been taken from the fool by the Lady Alicia, because Patch had amused himself, and teased her ancient nurse, by using it in no very courteous way, to the discomposure of the long ends of her favourite's cendal tippet. Nurse Cicely, for such was her name, and Patch, completed the group assembled in the hall; these menials being both privileged persons; the latter on account of his office, to supply food for mirth and conversation, to lighten the dull hours; and the female gossip on a much higher ground of consideration, that of having nursed in infancy the Lady Alicia herself; from whom she had been separated for many years, whilst her mistress was in Normandy, but to whom she had gladly returned, on her arrival once more in England, in the hope to end her days at Wilsworthy Castle.

Nurse Cicely was a great curiosity; she was tall and straight as a maple, but a little more bulky. Her face was full of conceit and consequence; with a double chin, which, as she carried her head high, and drew it backward whenever she spoke to an inferior, seemed to stand out so prominently, as if it claimed for itself alone the respect that might be due to the whole portly person. Her cheeks also looked always warm, and in order perhaps to afford them a cool air, she was very much in the habit of raising puffs of it, greatly to the increase of her own importance, by the constant exercise of a large round fan, much in vogue in her day, that was made from the blue, green, and burnished feathers of the peacock. Nurse Cicely and her fan were never seen apart: if she were angry, its quick and hasty flutter expressed her mood to all the house; whereas, if she were pleased, everybody knew that also, by the soft and complacent manner in which the fan waved backwards and forwards, with a motion that was too gentle to disturb even a fly upon its feathers. And if she were in a proud or offended humour, she would sit in sullen importance, agitating the air around her when she could disturb nothing else. Within or without doors, she never talked without the accompanying flourish of the fan; and

when she went to church she could no more have got through her devotions without it, than she could through her Pater-noster wanting her rosary. In fine, like most old nurses in her day (and the custom continued to the times of Elizabeth, and is noticed by Shakspeare in the Nurse of the Capulet), she carried the fan, and was as expert in its use as the ladies might have been in the days of Mr. Addison, who recommended its due exercise as an art worthy cultivation.

Nurse Cicely, at the moment the Saxon page entered the hall, was standing behind her mistress, putting something right that was amiss about her head-gear. But the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, without heeding her attendant, rose as he advanced, so much pleased was she with his appearance; and on the recommendation of his open countenance and gentle bearing (without knowing what were his pretensions in virtue of his blood to her castle), she bade him welcome to it with the utmost courtesy, took from him, with a smile, the abbot's letter, which Cædmon presented to her on his knees, and pressing it to her lips, as all the laity never failed to do an epistle that came from such a quarter, broke the seal, loosed the silken string, and forthwith read the contents: for Lady Alicia could read, rare as that accomplishment was not only with ladies, but even with nobles and knights of her day. She, however, in early youth had been designed by her friends for the cloister, in the hope, one day, to see her an abbess; and as learning was absolutely necessary in the heads of all conventual houses, she had received a learned education, was a good Latin scholar, and was not unacquainted with the then prevalent sciences of Europe. Like Edgitha, the amiable consort of Edward the Confessor, she delighted to converse with scholars, and with one like Cædmon, who was young enough to be her son, she would argue encouragingly, but closely. •

After having expressed her willingness to grant the Lord Abbot the permission he required, to hunt, with his friend, over her domain on the morrow, she proceeded to question Cædmon about the logicians at the abbey;—and it seemed she was as little inclined to favour their pretensions as Baldwin himself, for she thus concluded her somewhat severe animadversions on these professors: “For my own part, I would say to such teachers, as Alexander did to Aristotle, ‘Away with these abstruse questions, and teach me simple things;’ yet alas! such logicians are now held in our schools as the Minervas were among the ancients, as the very deities of wisdom.”

"Pshaw!" said Patch, "they are but as Minerva's bird, her owl. And canst thou, Master Cædmon, with all thy scholarship, canst thou tell me, wherefore the moping and melancholy bird of night was made by the heathen to stand as an emblem of wisdom?"

"May be," said Cædmon, "because the owl hath a more solemn aspect than any other bird of the air; and that which looks solemn ever imposes on the credulity of mankind."

"No, that is not it," said Patch. "Know you not that the owl hath a vision which can penetrate through what seems to be darkness to all other creatures? She sees, therefore, whatever comes across her path for prey—frogs, mice, anything. Now, these far-famed logicians are as the very owls of wisdom in our schools; for whilst their poor scholars grope about in the night of ignorance, they see how best to pounce upon them for their own especial profit."

"The Fool sends a shaft at a venture," said the Lady Alicia, "but it sometimes goes true to the mark. You seem to look around you, as if you admired our old hall, gentle Cædmon," she continued, more particularly addressing herself to the Saxon page, as she observed that his eyes were ranging around, apparently with a feeling of much interest: "what think you of it? Is it as large as the hall of your monastery?"

"No, not so large," replied Cædmon; "but, to my mind, of nobler and more beautiful proportions; less rich in ornament, but far exceeding it in grace. Oh, lady! brave men have walked these halls in days for ever gone! Hearts have here beat high with hope and energy, that soon were destined never to beat again, when summoned to defend them."

Cædmon sighed deeply as he uttered the last words. The Lady Alicia was surprised; and the Lady Adela, whose youth and modesty had hitherto kept her silent, ventured to look up, when, on seeing the shade of melancholy which stole over the fine and open features of the Saxon youth, though she knew not the cause of his emotions, she experienced that sympathy with his feelings which in the young and ingenuous bosom ever springs up, as it were spontaneously, at the mere presence of sorrow. Such a sense of pity never waits till it obtains the sanction of the judgment, for the young always feel before they think, at the sight of distress.

Wishing, therefore, to say something that should be kind to Cædmon, yet not very well knowing what to say, the Lady Adela blushed, as she gave utterance to the first thing that occurred to her, in a voice whose sweetness was delightful to the ear.

"You have not perhaps, gentle stranger, observed the pictures here; they are held in great estimation by limners. Some of them, too, are objects of curiosity, and of great price. See you that which represents our Lord?—the Holy Sepulchre is in the background; he is scourged by an Arabian, supposed to be Mahomet. This picture was painted at the desire of Peter the Hermit; and was sent by him from court to court among the princes of Europe, to rouse their indignation, so that they might to a man put on the Red Cross as the soldiers of God, and hasten to the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre."

"It is a picture of marvellous curiosity," said Cædmon; "but surely it would better suit our abbey church than these walls; it is fit for the contemplation of godly men. For my own part, I confess that the portraits of these warriors interest me more; especially that picture, which is the most striking of them all."

Cædmon pointed as he spoke to a painting on panel, representing a man seated on a war-horse, that he was restraining by bit and bridle, in his impatience for action, well expressed in every limb. The rider was a martial figure; he was depicted wearing a hauberk of chain-mail, bareheaded, his mantle waving in the wind, and holding, perched on his wrist, a hawk, the distinction of noble blood.

"How admirable is that picture!" said Cædmon. "Look, how impatient the horse seems to be, as he paws the ground, eager to start forward with his rider! The creature's head is drawn back till it touches his chest, by the force of bit and rein; he seems as if struggling to free himself from such control. And the rider, how majestic! what a mien! what an aspect! He is a Saxon too; I am glad of it: his hauberk is of the old fashion, short, with sleeves of linked mail, that reach not so low as the elbow. Harold wore such a coat in the fatal field of Hastings. He too, would sometimes ride forth bareheaded into action. But Harold could not have looked nobler than yonder Saxon chief, when he did so. My life on it, he whom that picture represents was a gallant warrior. Lady, may I crave his name?"

"It is the portrait of the former proprietor of this castle you so much admire," said the Lady Alicia.

"Oswy, the noble thane!" exclaimed Cædmon, with great animation, as a feeling of gratified pride, in seeing how striking a person was his illustrious grandsire, gave a glance of fire to his eyes, and a flush to his cheeks, as he fixed a speaking look on the Lady Alicia, and said, in a voice deep

and impressive from the strength of his emotions—"Lady, it is the grandson of Oswy who now stands before you!—who now comes as a menial to his father's halls!"

Surprise for a moment kept the Lady Alicia silent; but there was so much about Cædmon, in person, manner, and feeling, calculated to awaken for him an interest in the bosom of the gentler sex, that he needed not the additional claim of misfortune to touch the generous mind of the lady of the castle in his favour. Knowing, though by the law of conquest and of his king's pleasure, that her late husband had become honourably possessed of the fortress, of which she was now the châtelain and mistress, yet she could not, as a woman, see the natural heir, innocent as he was of all offence, stand before her as a menial, without a sense of compassion—of embarrassment that was most painful. And now, for the first time in her life, she felt a conviction of the truth, that the conquests of the Norman barons over the unfortunate Saxon thanes might convey to their heirs the lands and castles of the conquered, but they could never transfer with them that ease and self-satisfaction, that dignity in the possession, which always accompanies an inheritance transmitted from father to son, in the natural order of things. Strange and mingled were the emotions which now agitated her bosom. She felt the strongest interest for the personal merits of the young man, pity for his misfortunes, and the fear to wound afresh his already deeply wounded feelings; with something of a sense of shame, arising from the consciousness that she was standing in his place, in what he deemed should be his own halls. All these thoughts and feelings contributed to embarrass her; and she who would have felt herself perfectly at ease in the courts of kings, now scarcely knew to what subject to turn for relief in the presence of a poor Saxon page.

But, had she known better the character of Cædmon's mind, she need not have distressed herself on his account. A strong and overpowering feeling, at the moment he was told whom the picture represented, had surprised him; and, on the sudden impulse, he had declared his descent from Oswy. But this done, all was over. He knew too well the extent of his misfortunes to dwell upon their hopelessness. He knew how vain must be the powerless aspirations of a mind that no circumstances befriended, in times such as those in which he lived; and, in addition to a sense of religious duty, Cædmon had a stout and resolved spirit, together with that elevation of mind which determines to rest upon itself alone for support

and consolation under the most trying circumstances of human life.

There was the more merit in such an exercise of fortitude, because he was so keenly sensible of the whole weight of his misfortunes. The place in which he now stood was new to him, but not the thoughts the sight of it had so suddenly called up with so much poignancy and vigour: the thoughts of his grandsire slain, his castle lost; his father outlawed, dead,—of himself, an orphan, poor, dependent, the outcast of a despised race, living among enemies who had wrought for him and his unhappy countrymen all their woes. These were the recollections that rushed across the mind of Cædmon, and shook his inmost soul, as he stood before the portrait of the illustrious Oswy. But they passed away; he had turned from them with a sickening sensation, and the heart that had for a moment beat high with pride, sunk again, as he said in a voice of affectionate emotion, "Lady, is there no portrait of my father?"

On receiving the assurance that there was none, Cædmon turned aside, walked up to another picture, and stood before it, with his back towards the company, as if he were engaged in looking intently upon it; but really with no other view than to hide his face from observation, and to gain a short pause to recover his resolution, to become once more master of himself; for the powerful emotions of a mind such as his, proud, sensitive, and firm, shrinks from observation; and Cædmon was altogether of a character that would have thought no retreat too obscure, so it might afford him the opportunity to devour unmarked by any eye the pangs of such a moment.

The Lady Alicia, glad as himself to be relieved, retreated to write an answer to the Abbot;—and, moreover, writing being then so rare an accomplishment, no lady or gentleman who possessed it would willingly let slip an opportunity of displaying such scholarship. On the present occasion, therefore, she had a double motive for the task. The Lady Adela, who felt that uncomfortable sensation which hangs on every individual of a company where something has gone wrong, that is of too delicate a nature to be noticed by any one present, now endeavoured to relieve her own sense of awkwardness by the exercise of her fingers rather than her tongue, and worked on the faster, being most intently engaged on the embroidery of a mantle designed for her aunt.

Patch was talking to one of the hawks, which had flown down from its perch and settled on his wrist, probably mis-

taking the fool for a much nobler person. Nurse Cicely stood fanning herself, as usual, when she thought she ought to be occupied; and she did just the same whenever she fancied she had nothing to do. Everybody was silent, except Patch with his hawk.

Things were in this not very agreeable position, when one of the servitors, or borrel churls (for borrel was the livery of the Lady Alicia), announced the arrival of the new bower-maiden to wait on my Lady Adela; and soon after Grace Bolt made her appearance; for, anxious to avoid the importunities of Sir Simon, she had sought a service, and had here gained it by the influence of Dame Cicely, who was her most especial friend.

Grace entered the hall with her two hands crossed before her, making a curtesy at every step, and blushing, till cheeks, neck, and ears, reddened at the utter confusion and dismay she experienced on finding she was in such a presence, and had the whole length of the hall to walk up by herself, with everybody looking at her, before she could reach the Lady Adela, who had directed her to come forward as soon as she appeared.

Grace's entrance was a relief to all but herself; for the miller's daughter was something that might be talked to at this embarrassing moment without the least fear of its leading to any painful subject. And with many little idle questions and simple answers of "No" and "Yes," accompanied by a blush and a curtesy at every word, on the part of the damsel, did the Lady Adela contrive to fill up the time till the Lady Alicia returned with her letter to the Lord Abbot. This she very courteously delivered to his page, and bidding him a good-morrow with the gentlest tone and air, dismissed him, without further delay, from her presence and her castle. She next drew the Lady Adela aside, in earnest conference; and soon after both aunt and niece quitted the hall, leaving Grace Bolt to the care and tuition of Nurse Cicely, who, following the example of her betters, after dismissing Patch (but not quite so civilly as her mistress did Cædmon), undertook to make the new bower-woman acquainted with all the duties and mysteries of her office.

Left to themselves, Dame Cicely commenced her task by playing off all the consequential airs that a knowledge of her own station as an ancient and indulged domestic, and the extreme ignorance of Grace Bolt, would allow her to display. She next permitted Grace to exhaust all her notes of admira-

tion on every thing she saw, with an "Oh la!" and "Oh dear!" and "I never saw the like!" "And what a large place it is!" added Grace, looking around with wondering eyes. "I seem as if I were nothing as I stand in the middle of such a hall as this. And how dark the roof is!—it looks almost black! What great beams! And only see, how the spiders hang about everywhere, and make webs among the tapestry! And what a large window!—all full of images in coloured glass, like a church! And there is the blessed Virgin, too, in it, with her blue gown covered with silver stars, and a gold hoop all round her head!—how pretty! And what a number of bows, and staves, and lances, hang on the old walls! And what a figure that is that stands up just below the great window! I declare it looks as natural as live armour, as if it was just a going to walk. Well, now, I would not come across this hall all alone by myself, after dusk, for all the world. I should be frightened to death. How gloomy this old hall must look in the dark!"

"But there is nothing in it to frighten you, young maiden," said the Nurse. "We don't allow superstructions"—probably meaning superstitions—"here. We have too much good sense for those idle fears. There is no churchyard near us, nor have we any place like Pixon meadow in these parts, where no Christian body would like to go after sun-down," added Nurse Cicely, in a solemn tone; for though her familiarity with the old hall and the gloomy apartments of the castle prevented her feeling any terror in going about it, even at the regular hours for spirits to walk abroad, yet was the good dame as grossly superstitious about hobgoblins, pixies, white women, and grey men, as any Devonian could be, with whom an entire belief in all legends of this nature, as they had been handed down to the Saxons by the ancient Britons, was never to be questioned. "There is nothing to fear here," added Nurse Cicely. "My lady and I used to take my young lady roundly to task for her fearful notions about the castle, when she first came from Normandy to live in this place, and you must not go to put any of your idle fancies into her head again, as bower-maidens are apt to do with their ladies when they go to trim them. And what can you do to fit you for my Lady Adela's service?"

"I can sew and knit," replied Grace, "and can make a smockfrock, or a flour-sack, as I used to do for father. I can handle a broom, and can bridle, saddle, and lade the ass, as well as father himself, or our knave at the mill."

Nurse Cicely tossed her head, and glanced on the girl a look of contempt: "Thou hast a pretty commodity of qualities to fit thee for a bower-maid, truly! But it was my pity for thy ignorance made me pass over many things, and take thee for my young mistress's service. But thou must learn other matters, ere thou wilt be fit to trim my lady for the court."

Grace looked abashed, but curtesied, and assured her patroness she would readily learn, might she but have the teaching.

"It shall not be lacking," said Dame Cicely with an air of importance; "I will instruct thee myself. Thou must learn how to manage thy lady's ribbons, and to crisp her hair without burning it with the iron; and how to put on her caul and her mantle in its right folds, so that it may blow out like a sail, and shew the flowering upon it when she walks to church. And thou must learn to trim me, also," added the nurse, with a flourish of the fan, "for 'tis a part of thy duty; for my young lady's maid is ever my maid, when I take upon me to recommend her, except the wages. And in return, I undertake to settle all that she is to do and to leave undone in her office; and respecting the same thou wilt need some further directions."

Another courtesy from Grace, and a civil assurance of strict obedience, procured for her a nod of approbation, and a further string of instructions from the self-sufficient dame.

"Thou must be no babbler, Grace," said the old woman; "to be such is not seemly in a young woman who sees and hears her lady at all times; and, when she is out of humour, hears a great deal her lady would never desire her to have heard when she comes to herself again, and thinks about it."

"Such matters shall never pass my lips," replied Grace, prudently.

"Right, child, right," said Dame Cicely; "thou must never prate about them to anybody,—not to my young lady's aunt for all the world. You must tell them to nobody but myself, who never say a word about what I hear; and it is your duty, Grace, to tell me, for I got you the service, and could get you out of it again, did I mind so to do. But never fear; be a good girl, and trust me, who am as a sort of mother to you, and you need not much mind anybody else in the family. And before you do anything my young lady orders you to do, be sure and ask me if I approve of it."

Grace looked demure, but gave no ready "Yes" to this part

of her instructions; but inquired if she might have leave sometimes to go to see her father at the mill, or to have a holiday at the fairs.

"No," was the short and snappish answer. "It is not seemly for young damsels to be running to fairs. But, as to thy father, Grace, he is a likely man, an honest, and well to do in the world; and when thou wantest to see him, I do not know but I may walk to the mill myself and tell him so; for as he is something up in years, and a widower of good repute, there can be no harm said about me for the matter; and he can come and see thee here, which will be better than thy gadding."

Grace ventured to say she liked to go abroad sometimes.

"Ay, at right and proper seasons, wench," said the Nurse; "to mass, penance, or confession; but not to fairs; for I would not have you be running after idle minstrels, and dancing boys, and mocking apes, and shows, with turgetors and May-games, as the maids do now. It was far other in my young days. We were as staid then at fifteen as at fifty."

"And may I not go sometimes to a wedding, or to a May-game?" inquired Grace, in a very supplicatory tone and manner.

"A wedding!" exclaimed the Nurse in an accent of surprise—"a wedding! What will the foolish thing ask next, I trow? A wedding! we never so much as talk of such a thing here. We admit no suitors at the castle. We said 'nay' to Sir Geoffrey Malduit, one of the fiercest barons of the west, when he but the other day would have given all his broad lands, and stout castles to boot, to have wedded our Lady Adela. But we said 'nay.' Most likely she will be a nun at last. We pray day and night to the Virgin in our household, and think of little else than cells and beads. We are all maidens here, and never think of weddings."

"But the old lady was married once," said Grace, courtesying.

"Old lady!" exclaimed the Nurse; "call the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, the handsomest woman in all Devonshire, old lady! Marry, and what should I be called then—I who nursed her when she was a babe, were she to be called old? In good sooth, how pert be these wenches, that like cockerels have hardly burst their egg-shells! all's old with them, I trow."

"I thought age was reverend," said Grace; "and, indeed,

I meant no offence; for I held you, Dame Cicely, to be more reverend than anybody else in the castle."

"Hold me reverend, slut!" said the Nurse, fanning herself in high wrath; "I would have you to understand, that I am no more reverend than yourself, Mistress Grace of the mill! But I will keep my temper, seeing how ignorant you are."

Grace begged pardon with all humility, and the nurse dismissed her for the present with this final charge—"And we must have that dress of thine amended. Truly, thou art too fine! tricked up like Maid Marian at a May-game. Thou must wear a plain kirtle of durance, instead of that cendal court-pie; and over thy stammel petticoat only a tunic of brown serge. Those foolish rings in thy ears—they are of pretty gold, Antwerp work I see—they become thee not. We will have them taken out, and I will wear them for thee. It better suits a foolish wench like thee to study godliness than how to make herself look pretty and fine. Do this, and thou shalt do well and wisely. And now go thy ways."

Grace, somewhat chopfallen, and disappointed more especially at this intimation of a reformation to be made in her dress, that was to begin with the plunder of her ears, looked pettish, and prepared to make a sullen and silent retreat, when the old nurse once more called her back,—“And be sure, wench,” she said, “to keep the servitors and the bachelors of the household at a distance; and do not let the fool, Patch, kiss you.”

Another curtesy, and another assent to her instructions on the part of Grace, finished the colloquy; and both went about their several duties in the household.

CHAPTER XIV.

Go bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

SHAKSPEARE.

"Who hath seen the Palmer this morning?" was the first question asked by Abbot Baldwin, after he had returned from matins, where he had not observed him among the other pilgrims.

"That have I, most holy father," said the Seneschal, who stood near. "For being exempt from attendance at matins to-day, on account of having my duty to perform without doors, such as to make your reverence's presents to certain knights having their lodgment in the town, and also to give notice to the tenants and vassals on what day I purposed to hold your reverence's court ——"

"How prolix thou art grown of late, old man," said Baldwin; "I ask if thou hast seen our palmer guest, and thou tellest me about holding our courts and making our customary presents. Do keep the straight road in thy speech, for we neither like a starting nag, nor a roundabout speaker. Where didst thou see the palmer?"

"In brief, then, my lord, I saw him at early dawn casting his pebbles; some of which I conclude he must have laboured to bring with him all the way from Syria, to help make up our Mount Joy, to which all our palmers contribute a stone or two, to complete their heap of thankfulness and joy, on their safe return from the Holy Land. I was in haste, and as the Mount Joy stands near to the hermitage of St. John, I did not pause to give the palmer a 'good morrow,' fearing the hermit might come forth and join in our discourse, and so delay me; for the hermit is a great prater, and very circumstantial in the plainest matter of discussion."

"Even like thyself, worthy seneschal," said Baldwin; "therefore thou likest him not. Is it not so? I never knew

two great talkers who desired the company of each other; a good listener were better society for either. In this particular the old saying holds not good, for like does not affect like. And so the palmer is gone? But where is Sir Henry de Pomeroy? We will but take a slight refection, and then bid the grooms bring round the horses to the gates; and we will forward to hunt the stag over the grounds of our good neighbour the Lady Alicia de Beaumont."

Accordingly, the abbot made a short breakfast on that morning; and the chief grooms, whilst preparing the horses for the chase, had as usual to listen to the growling and grumbling of an old Saxon huntsman, the best the country round, and therefore retained in his office at the abbey, notwithstanding his perpetual outcry against the Norman tyranny of the New Forest Laws.

"So we are to hunt to-day," said old Willibald, following the strain of his accustomed humour; "to hunt over the domain of my Lady de Beaumont; and the Norman dame's permission has been asked and had so to do. Good Saxon lands are they, for all that. Much rather would I see the pack loosed on them, to hunt off the usurping holders of the property, than the poor foolish deer."

"Why, you did not use to care much who was the owner of the lands you hunted over, so long as there was good sport, Willibald," said one of the grooms; "how is it that you are grown so nice about it now?"

"Because," answered Willibald, "the great people have grown so reckless about the poor folk in their sports. Hunting and hawking used to be followed only as sports in my young days; but now knights and barons seem to think it is the only thing they have to do in this land; and they pursue the wild beasts of the forest with more fury than they do a Jew or a Saracen, which is a great sin. Why, I tell you, Dick the groom, the hunters now-a-days have become as savage and as fierce as the very brutes they chase. Only see how they serve the poor husbandmen, and their flocks and herds; they drive them from their green pastures and pleasant fields, that wild boars may range among them undisturbed."

"Ay," said a helper of old Willibald, who had caught from him something of his humour,—“ay, and if these cruel hunters pass a poor man's door, look to it well; let him hasten to bring forth the best the house can afford, and readily, or woe be to him, he is a ruined man, or is straight accused of some foul treason."

"But my Lord Abbot is no such hunter as these," said Dick the groom; "he likes only the red deer; and is not one of those who, as Geoffrey Malduit, think it a greater crime in a vassal to transgress the forest laws in the least particular than it is to kill a man that is a bondman; for dogs and slaves, you know, both wear the collar, the badge of their masters."

"I would wear a rope rather round my neck, and be hung by it, too, than such a necklace," said old Willibald. "But I am a free man; I will say that for my Lord Abbot, he gave me my freedom, and that makes me such a slave to all his whims; for St. Dunstan never hear me when I curse a dog at fault, or an enemy in a tussel, if I could be ungrateful. And the monks are not the worst masters after all, and they don't make such a coil about the forest laws as the great Norman barons do, Dick."

"No, not such a coil as Geoffrey Malduit, who for fear the justices and the sheriffs should not be hard enough, is constantly sending about the game-officer to pray them to put the laws in force."

"Ay," said Willibald; "so that fines for disturbing the game, degradation for a ceorl, slavery for a husbandman, and death for a slave, if any one of them transgress the forest laws, are things not likely to be forgotten in this kingdom. Curse the Dane Canute! I say—though men do call him great—who first thought of such laws. And the foul fiend keep the spirit of the Norman William in his hottest purgatory! for he made those laws even yet more galling to man and beast; for the very dogs suffer by them, and are maimed, unless they belong to privileged masters."

"I would as soon see my own foot maimed, as my dog's," said Dick.

"It is almost as great a piece of cruelty," continued Willibald; "as cruel as that introduced after King Harold's time, when the Normans had a trick of making deaf the horses of the Saxons; and then said they thought it was the Saxon way so to do, forsooth."

"There have been Norman barons who have found out that it is the best way for some of the poorer folk to have neither eyes nor ears," said Dick; "and so they treat us worse than they did the Saxon horses."

"We have ears and eyes," said Willibald, "but we have no hearts, no spirits, to deal with oppressions, as readily as to hear and see them, else would every Saxon rise, to a man, in these kingdoms, and soon shake off the Norman yoke."

Here the social grumblings and discontents of Willibald and his friend Dick were disturbed by an obedientiary, who came to hasten their preparations for the field. In a little time all was ready, and a gallant train of hunters set forward to the chase.

Though we will not say that our abbot was as famous a hunter as Nimrod, or even as Walter, bishop of Rochester, who in the twelfth century was so celebrated for his love of the chase, that, when above eighty years old, he made it the sole business of his life, leaving his diocese in spiritual matters to take care of itself; yet Abbot Baldwin loved hunting. In his fondness for the field he rather resembled a churchman he greatly admired and constantly imitated, more especially in his taste for opposition and quarrels—the famous Thomas-à-Becket, who sought the chase merely as a recreation and a relief to the more weighty matters in which he was engaged; so that when Becket went on an embassy to the King of France, he took with him, amongst the other attendants of his costly train, dogs and hawks proper for the field.

Our abbot, accompanied by the prior, several other ecclesiastics, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and a train of nearly fifty persons, now came forth, equipped with bows and arrows, the latter being the missiles always used in hunting the stag.

On this day neither the abbot nor Sir Henry had forgotten that, though their apparent object was a hunting-match, their more essential one was to obtain for Sir Henry a fair opportunity for his forming an acquaintance with the ladies of the castle. Neither, therefore, had neglected his dress. The light suit of Lincoln green, the baldrick richly worked, from which hung his bugle, the cap with its waving plume, the bow and the quiver, altogether became the fine person of Sir Henry de Pomeroy. And as to my Lord Abbot, the hunting suit in which he had arrayed himself (not having about it one thing that was ecclesiastical, except the hood, and the pendent cross on his breast), was so gay and fashionable, that, but for his vows, Sir Henry might have fancied he had some design of rivalry in view, in thus tricking himself out to appear before the eyes of a fair lady; whilst in the equipments of his horse (he rode a swift Spanish jennet, light of limb, and black and shining as the wing of a raven), he had adopted the most aristocratic and costly style of the age. For not content with a short hunting-housing, he had for his saddle a piece of fantastic extravagance, which was about this time introduced into England by the Crusaders, from the East—a beautifully

painted saddle, the subject of which, according to the then prevalent fashion, was chosen from pagan history; so that, in a scene from the siege of Troy, Paris, Helen, Achilles, and Agamemnon, all went a hunting with Abbot Baldwin, on the back of his sprightly jennet. His bridle was of red cordovan leather, hung with little silver bells; and knots of the same bright colour appeared above the ears of the animal thus gaily trimmed. Altogether, both horse and rider were much too remarkable to do other than attract the most general observation.

The varlet who rode at the head of the train bore the abbot's banner cheerily in his hand; and immediately after him came old Willibald, having slung across his shoulders both baldrick and bugle; although, whilst any of the attendants of laymen carried bugles, it was deemed indecorous for an abbot's servant to blow a horn. A body of hunters and servitors carried the bows and arrows of the company; and the noble alauntes, or stag-hounds, were led on tied together in leash or in couples. These were of the kind then beginning with the connoisseur hunters of the day somewhat to supersede the more swift and graceful greyhound. The alauntes were of a strong, sturdy breed; slow in their movements till let loose from the slips, but sure in the business of the chase. They had a fine deep musical bay, with long ears, thick large heads, and eyes of jet in blackness; unlike the greyhound, which hunts by sight, these dogs pursued their prey by the scent alone.

We must here, however, leave the Lord Abbot to wend on his way, to ride stately out of the abbey gates, and to salute by an inclination of his head, and a *benedicite*, all the good people, men, women, and children, who bowing or curtesying came forth at their doors, or at their windows, to see him and his gallant train pass along, whilst we say something of the Lady Alicia de Beaumont. Her leave having been obtained for the sports, she set all the hunters and officers under the forester to work, to make all ready; intending that herself, the fair Adela, and a few of her ladies, should ride forth to welcome the Lord Abbot, and to meet him with a gay countenance in the field.

The Lady Alicia exceedingly lamented that from the shortness of the notice it was impossible for her to display her suite in the usual state of the period; for there had been no time to allow of the erection of a temporary building of wood, for the reception of herself and her maidens. Such a building at a hunting match was customary for all ladies of condition;

whence they could issue forth to receive the hunters, or retire to it and witness the chase. Even the dogs were here frequently secured till the moment they were loosed; and as these temporary pavilions were usually covered with green boughs, they were called the "thrysting." But we must now hasten to the field.

The morning had dawned with the fairest promise; only a few light and fleecy clouds were floating slowly in the sky; and the mist which hung about the tors indicated a day that would prove clear and genial, when those vapours should disperse before the warmth of a May sun.

Nothing could be more cheering than was such a morning to the company, who now set forth from the castle. The breeze fanned, but scarcely blew; the air was scented with the fragrance of the white-blossomed hawthorn and the early flowers of spring; the Tavy was shining bright, and running gladly along its bed of rocks and stones; not a rill of water but crept from its hiding place, under banks entangled with briars and weeds, or thickly set with their clusters of *primeroles* (to use old Chaucer's word for that palest and prettiest of yellow flowers); and all the streamlets came forth to run their course as joyously as did the river itself in the light of the sun. The dew still overspread the grass, sparkled on the hedges, or hung as a jewel on every flower.

The beautifully-limbed and rich brown cattle, so peculiar to Devon, were seen in the meadows, and the tinkling of sheep-bells among the hills gave a pleasing intimation of those numerous flocks which, from time immemorial, have constituted the chief wealth of the landholders of the west.

As the party rode forward they now and then saw a hare or a rabbit, that had been started from its covert, scud timidly across the grass, and hie for shelter to the hollows and bushes that lay on every side; whilst the birds, secure on this day from all molestation (as the company carried no hooded hawks to let fly upon them at pleasure), safe in their airy realm, and seeming as if conscious there was a peace proclaimed to the feathered nations, gladly gave notice of it to their mates and companions by their warblings and songs, and by answering each other's call in a cheering note from tree to tree.

The bee, with its humming ditty, sped from bush to bank, to taste how sweet the dew might be that lay in the bell of the hyacinth, or on the wild thyme or the May. And the dragon-fly, with its gossamer wings, and its body of gold and gems, darted by; and the yellow butterfly, ever the first seen in

spring, seemed as it sported among the sunny flowers, as if one of the primroses had become instinct with life, and had taken wing, on this fair morning. Indeed, so delightful was the scene, and all its accompaniments, that every heart rejoiced under the influences of the invigorating air and the soul-inspiring face of nature.

The king of forests, the stately stag, that was on this day to become the object of the sports, was soon unharboured. Three long notes on the bugle gave the signal for uncoupling the hounds. And now, not only the abbot and his train, but many of the household from the castle, were seen urging forward their gallant steeds to join the hunt. Some rushed from the heights, others started from the valleys and glens; all appeared animated by one impulse, an ardour for the chase; a passion which, in all countries and ages, in his savage or in his civilized state, seems natural to man.

The uncoupling the dogs, as they stood with their deep-mouthed bayings, proclaiming their impatience, "straining on the slips," was the work of a few minutes, and "Cheerily, Hector!"—"Away, Tristram!"—"On, Brute!"—"Hyke, a Rowland!" formed a joyous acclaim from the throats of the huntsmen, as they hallooed on the hounds.

The hart already had sprung forward at the sight of his enemies, his dappled sides shaking with sudden fear; and tossing high his head as his antlers broke through, crushed or tore down many a branch that crossed his path, and was opposed to his flight in the forest, where he had been started from his lair. Horsemen and horses strained after him in pursuit; scarcely did the hoofs of the animals imprint the ground, whilst the dogs, with that swift springing motion which makes them seem to skim rather than to tread the earth, with wide-expanded nostrils, snuffing over turf and mire, so as to keep the scent, gave no rest to the hunted hart, which, still flying before them, through forest, stream, and vale, at length took the direction towards the moor, and was speedily on that part of it called Cudlipp Town.

Soon did the horsemen follow; all were now engaged in the very heat of the chase: the winding bugle, the shouts of the hunters, the baying of the dogs, altogether made up a chorus that rang through the woods, and shook like distant thunder the echoes of the sylvan scene.

It was at this crisis there was seen sweeping over the moor, in the direction from Wilsworthy, the noble mistress of that

castle, accompanied by her fair ward and a train of damsels and attendants. They were attired with hood and mantle of Lincoln green, suited to a hunting field; but their manner of advance, their gestures and their speed, indicated a cause of alarm rather than of sport. No one was left in doubt as to its object, when the Lady Alicia, while she advanced, called out to one of the huntsmen who drew near her, "Save the hart!—draw off the dogs!—it is Saladin, my favourite hart, they are hunting to the death;—not for the value of half my lands would I have him slain!"

The huntsman no sooner heard his lady's commands than off he set to endeavour to fulfil them. And whilst he is bent on this errand of mercy, we must, as briefly as we may, state the cause of the hunted animal's being so great a favourite with his mistress; as some of the most important events of our history are connected with this day's sport.

Saladin had been a beautiful fawn, which, from the kindness of the Lady Alicia and her niece, had become so tame that he would follow them through the park, and even eat from their hands. A paddock had been especially devoted to his service; where, daily visited by the ladies, he became more and more gentle by their constant care. Some one, however (it was never known who did the mischief), at length, in mere wantonness, turned him loose into the forest among his fellow deer. Tame animals, when so turned adrift, ever become the wildest; and Saladin, in a short space of time, forgot all his gentle nurture, and grew the most dangerous, as well as the largest and noblest of the whole herd of deer.

In vain had the foresters hitherto attempted to reclaim him by fair means; and by foul ones his lady would not suffer him to be approached; still hoping that, after a while, he would of his own free will return to his old haunts and domestic habits near the castle. All the foresters knew their lady's pleasure respecting Saladin, and would as soon have thought of chasing the heroic Soldan himself, after whom the hart was named, as of turning the favourite out for a hunt. They had been directed to caution the abbot's huntsmen respecting this most remarkable stag; but by some unlucky chance there had been a good deal of blundering in all that old Willibald had to do or to think upon that day. His head was filled with the forest laws, and his heart with wrath for their cruelty; so that, by giving a half attention to what was said to him, he had so completely misunderstood the caution of the Lady Alicia's

forester, that, acting by the rule of contrary (to which all blunderers and self-willed persons seem to be sworn), he had actually taken some pains to unharbour the very stag he had been requested to spare.

The huntsman, whom his lady had despatched to draw off the dogs, knowing how anxious she felt on the subject, made it a point to shout his commands to every one he met mounted, without staying to ascertain if any such rider might be of the number of those who followed the sports.

Now these shouts happened to meet the ear of one who, seated on a fine swift horse, seemed as if he were proceeding to join the hunters, having in all probability been drawn to the spot by hearing the dogs and the bugles in full chorus along the fields. Be this as it may, the rider heard very distinctly the cry—"It is the will of my Lady Alicia that the stag should be spared"—upon which, without making any reply to it, he called to his side his varlet, who rode after him, bearing his bow. He took the bow in his own hands, and forthwith rode rapidly towards the scene of action, where all the hunters might now be seen gathering with a speed as unsparing as if they had been impelled forward by the very spirit of Nimrod himself to a mighty chase.

The rider who had thus suddenly appeared was a young man of a handsome aspect, though his features were of a somewhat wild cast; his complexion had been burnt by the sun to the brownness of a ripe nut; and though he wore the civil costume of the period, yet his air, his demeanour, and the *manège* of his horse were altogether knightly. He looked like a crusader returned, after hard service in the Holy Land. We must, however, for the present leave him, and see how it fares with the hunted animal, and if his reprieve is likely to reach him in time for his preservation.

The stag, closely pursued, had been driven into a recess, formed at the end of a lane, near which it opened on the moor. The recess in question was, as it were, walled in by a high bank overhung with trees, so that there was no retreat in the rear; and in the front both dogs and men had been pouring down upon the imprisoned animal from all sides of the open space.

Thus was the hunted hart hemmed in, as the bugle sounded to bay, with a blast that was heard far and wide. The animal, at once desperate and furious, now made a stand that was one of danger to his eager pursuers. With limbs quivering, sides panting, white with foam, with eyes wild and straining, as if

ready to burst their sockets in the agony of fear, the stag, now retreating, now rushing on, bending his head and butting with his antlers, reckless if man, horse, or hound, became the object of destruction, threatened death to every living thing that approached him.

Some of the boldest of the hounds repeatedly attempted to fly at his throat, while others kept back, making their stand and baying with all their strength. Still the stag was unconquered. Several of the dogs he gored, others he disabled, and though nearly exhausted and about to fall to the ground, even yet he made a gallant and last struggle for his life. Whilst he was so struggling an arrow whizzed through the air: it was truly aimed, for it struck the noble animal in the very centre of the frontal bone and penetrated to the brain. The wounded hart sank at once, as the tears burst from his eyes at the sudden pang, and ere they could run down his hairy face, the dogs, one and all, rushed in upon their fallen prey, and in another minute throttled him.

The hunters now crowded round, and drew off the hounds, lest they should mangle the carcass; and as their shouts of triumph, accompanied by the blowing of the bugle in the victorious morte-note of a hunting field, rang over hill and vale, a gallant train rode forward, but all too late for the object which had brought them to the spot. It was the Lady Alicia and her suite. Dismay was in her cries, wrath in her countenance, and she trembled with passion, as she said,—“The hart has fallen by a malicious hand.” All seemed surprised; and she added, in that deep, low, but decisive tone, which makes itself audible even in the midst of a tumult, “I saw the man; he darted suddenly forward from behind yonder trees. It was Geoffrey de Malduit who slew my noble hart! After him!—secure him! he has transgressed the forest laws; he has no right to hunt on my domain. He shall dearly suffer for this, or, by Our Lady, I am no true woman!—Secure him—he shall face me here.”

“He does face you here, lady,” said the bold horseman we have already noticed (the stranger who proceeded to join the sport), as he now rode up to the Lady Alicia, and with so much audacity, that not a man who was present but vented an exclamation expressive of his indignant feelings at the sight. Some cried “Shame!” others, “Outlaw!” and one used the word “Coward!”—that one was Sir Henry de Pomeroy. In another minute more than a dozen hunters surrounded Malduit; some pulled out their knives, others

bent their bows, and an old forester approached to pull him off his horse.

"Touch me not!" exclaimed the intruder. "Touch me not!" If any man lay hand on me, be he knight, varlet, or bondman, he dies on the spot!" Malduit drew forth a short dagger and flourished it over his head, more like a mummer in a dagger-dance than a warrior among men. Yet all present knew him to be a bold fellow, brutal and insolent. "And what sort of curs are ye all, I trow,—I exempt my Lord Abbot,—that you thus surround me with your drawn knives? your very hounds would teach you a more manly play, for they hunted not yonder stag without giving him law,—a chance by flight to escape their fangs. But you,—you hem in a man a whole pack of you, with an odds of twenty to one against him. And you, Sir Knight of the green jacket,—you who give the name of coward with so little ceremony,—what have you to say to me? I am a stranger to you, but, trust me, I am a belted knight; will you answer for that word so insolently spoken, in a way that a gentleman may notice with honour to himself?"

"My sword is my tongue with such a one as you have proved to be this day, and with no other will I answer," replied Sir Henry. "You have shewn malice and discourtesy towards this lady; you have wilfully slain the animal she would have spared. I will answer you in any way of arms,—but it is not well to prate of such matters in such a gentle presence,—if you dare avouch yourself a knight."

"Dare avouch myself a knight!" exclaimed Malduit, interrupting him, as a glance of fire flashed from his eyes; "why, what else should I avouch myself? All the world knows I have given and taken blows with Saladin himself in Syria. And do you think a doubt can rest on my honour! Go to, foolish boy,—for you are but a boy to me," continued the braggart; "what if I should think you unworthy of a better meeting than one for chastisement to such a malapert tongue. Hark ye! Sir Knight of the cream face; crop your woman's locks and cultivate a beard; be something more like a man than you are now, and possibly I may then think 't worth while to talk to you in another strain."

Sir Henry de Pomeroy's countenance displayed all the changes of violent passion, as Geoffrey Malduit, in a tone of calm scorn, pronounced these taunts, as if he felt quite careless about the matter, and even doubtful if Sir Henry might be of sufficient consequence for him to fight such an adver-

sary in arms. But the passions of all present were too much roused to be easily appeased; all seemed bent on one purpose, that of taking an immediate vengeance on Geoffrey de Malduit.

In vain did the Lady Alicia interpose to prevent a further quarrel, till, fearing one of those affrays so common to the period, and commanding her own disturbed feelings, in the hope to prevent mischief, she implored the Lord Abbot to use his authority, and to restore peace in the name of the holy church; resolving, however, within her own mind, that she would, on the first convenient opportunity, call her sturdy enemy to a legal account for this breach of the forest laws.

For some time, in vain also did my Lord Abbot call on all men to hear in his person the voice of peace and of the church. At length, he so far prevailed, that all thoughts of an immediate vengeance were laid aside. After the first burst of their indignation had exhausted itself in angry words, the hunters and foresters contented themselves with standing together in knots, apart from the lady and the nobles, and communicated to each other the suggestions of their suppressed rage, in low murmurs, like thunder muttering among the tors of Dartmoor after a storm has rolled off, but has not subsided in the distance.

Malduit listened in sullen silence to what the abbot urged upon his consideration, that he ought to make some considerable compensation to the Lady Alicia for the wrong he had done on her estate; and, as a further proof of penitence, he ought to send an offering in gold to the altar of St. Julien, the patron saint of all hunters, in the abbey church.

Geoffrey Malduit had no desire to quarrel with my Lord Abbot; he therefore very civilly told him, that though he honoured a churchman as much as any man, he would never think of troubling him for any advice when without the walls of his abbey. Nevertheless, for the sake of my Lord Abbot's peace, and out of respect to his person, he, Geoffrey, would, in obedience to his wishes, withdraw himself from the present company without more words; wherefore he would at once take his leave. So saying, and giving a glance of scorn and insolence at the ladies, not omitting one of the same description at Sir Henry de Pomeroy, he withdrew from the party, whose sports he had so maliciously interrupted, and indeed destroyed for the day, debating with himself as he withdrew what he should do next to express his bitterness and his

revenge, for the wrongs he fancied he had sustained from the ladies of Wilsworthy Castle. In truth, so deadly was the hatred he cherished in his own breast against them, that he would have found it difficult to decide which of the two he hated most—the Lady Adela, who had refused his proffered hand, or the Lady Alicia, who had encouraged her niece in that refusal.

The foresters, hunters, and attendants, who had been conferring apart among themselves, the moment after Malduit withdrew from the spot, rushed with one accord round the fallen stag. There taking their stand, each, to a man, drew forth his long hunting knife, and extending and crossing them over the body of the deer, as in one deep voice, so unanimous was their feeling, they called on St. Julien to bear witness that they would hereafter resent to the death, in a fair and open field, the injury done to their lady and mistress, would she but allow the contest, on Geoffrey de Malduit and all his followers, for the hunting of the smitten hart.

A shout of triumph followed this impassioned oath. It was repeated by an echo of a neighbouring rock, so clearly and distinctly that Geoffrey de Malduit started, as he was slowly and sullenly retiring from the scene of the chase.

“What is that?” he said to his varlet, who now again bore his bow.

“The followers of the Lady Alicia have vowed a vow of vengeance against thee and thy people, Sir Geoffrey; I heard them mutter their intent among themselves ere we departed from the field.”

“Is it so?” said Malduit: “then let the devil, whom they have awakened to be godfather to their oath—for I heard him make response to it,—let him aid their work; I care not. I will back and tell them so.”

Another minute or two brought the reckless Malduit once more before the lady and her train. “Hark ye, my men of the green wood,” said Sir Geoffrey, addressing the foresters who stood around; “ye who would do battle for the lady of the smitten hart, I will meet ye all at any time or place: my followers are no cravens; they will not shun a fair field. But know ye, ye who draw the sword, that ye do it for one who has smitten in her day a nobler hart than lies dead in yonder nook.”

So saying, the bold and insulting baron turned his horse back, dashed the spurs up to the rowel head into his sides, and rode off, leaving the Lady Alicia astonished at his insolence

and daring; and so incensed by it, that she shook with passion in every limb. But though thus startled, she made an effort to recover her self-possession; and as no lamentation could restore her lost favourite to life, she spent no more words in vain regrets. She felt she could now do no less than hasten to express her sense of the devoted spirit that her vassals and followers had evinced for her service. And on her also expressing her thanks to the Lord Abbot for his timely interference to prevent a fray on the spot, Baldwin took the opportunity of introducing to her notice his young and gallant friend, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, who had evinced so ready a spirit to maintain her cause in opposition to the brutal Geoffrey de Malduit. The lady received him very graciously; but ere she could offer him her thanks, she was called off by the ceremonies of the hunting field, to give her attention to those who were busied around the deer.

The huntsmen, the prickers, and inferior personages, now all went down upon their knees, as the chief forester blew three clear and distinct mots upon his bugle; then, agreeably to that most ancient custom, which descended even to comparatively modern times, he approached the principal lady in the field, and kneeling at her horse's side, offered her his *couteau de chasse*, that she might proceed to make the first cut in the breast of the stag.

The Lady Alicia knew perfectly well in what manner custom had long ago required this compliment should be received and returned. Accordingly, she pronounced the usual form of thanks with the very best grace; and, as usual, expressed a hope that St. Tibb (then the favourite saint held to be propitious to ladies who were hunting or hawking) might cause the fallen hart to prove "one of grease," and deputing the forester to act for her in the ceremony, prayed him to accept a gold bezant (which she handed to him) for his trouble. And finally, she requested that all present would proceed to the castle, and drink a cup to refresh themselves after the fatigues of the day. Whilst my Lord Abbot, his friend, and their train, were also invited with every mark of respect.

It was my Lord Abbot's pleasure to accept the invitation graciously, but not eagerly; and his friend's to avail himself of it with a smile, and an inclination of the head, as he drew off his plumed bonnet in token of profound respect, an action that shewed his bare brow, and his fine and flowing locks to the greatest advantage.

The Lady Alicia having once more assured her noble

guests how welcome they would be to her halls, called her favourite hound, Rowland, to her side, and bowing to all present, turned her horse's head in the direction towards Wilsworthy; and the Lady Adela, and all her damsels, sweeping after her at gentle speed, she left the Abbot, Sir Henry, and the rest of the hunters, to see the deer carted, and to follow with it, at their own leisure, to the castle.

CHAPTER XV.

The banquet waits our presence, festal joy
Laughs in the mantling goblet, and the night,
Illumined by the taper's dazzling beam,
Rivals departed day.

BROWNE.

Fill full! why this is as it should be; here
Is my true realm, amidst bright eyes and faces,
Happy as fair! Here sorrow cannot reach.
BYRON'S *Sardanapalus*.

WE will not pause to describe the welcome that the Lord Abbot and Sir Henry de Pomeroy received at the castle, more than to say it was at once hospitable and courtly. At the upper end of the hall, beneath the large window, stood what was called the dais—a raised platform, over which was spread a rich carpet, from the looms of Flanders; and here was placed the table appropriated for the lady of the castle and her guests. Along the centre of the hall were seen tables of oak, the first of which was alone permanent, the rest being nothing more than boards placed on tressels, and removed after every meal. When all the household was assembled, not less than sixty persons sat down daily to dinner. A large silver cup filled with salt, stood in the middle of the tables; above this, towards the head of the hall, the freemen, yeomen, and officials, took their seats; and below it sat all the vassals, serfs, servitors, and slaves of the castle.

There was grandeur in the *coup d'œil* of such an assemblage of persons and ranks; from the noble lady and her guests who sat on the dais, to the very herdsman and slave, with all their intermediate grades, dining together beneath the lofty roof of that old Gothic hall. The sight was as pleasing to the feelings, as it was striking to the eye; for it was almost the only hour, when thus assembled at a common meal, during these times of heartless oppression and suffering

in England, that the higher and the lower orders seemed at all to share a pleasure in common, or to lay aside, on the one hand, the constant exercise of arbitrary power, and on the other a sense of subserviency and fear, that degraded alike both freeman and slave.

After the Lord Abbot had given the benediction at the conclusion of the repast, the inferior part of the assembly withdrew; the temporary tables were removed, and the lady, her noble guests, and the chief personages of the household, alone remained seated over their cups; which the Norman knights seasoned with much conversation, the hard drinking of the Saxons having gone quite out of fashion.

In order that mirth and music might not be wanting to enliven the social hour, the house-steward presently introduced a company of wandering joculators, whom he had appointed to attend on this occasion. These were a set of vagabond minstrels, who played on the crota, the timbrel, the tambour, pipe, and harp. They were also excellent in tumbling, dancing, balancing, and tricks of legerdemain. Some of these performances were truly surprising, and in the dark ages were duly ascribed to the power of the devil. There is every cause to believe that the magic lantern was not altogether unknown in these times; since we read in ancient authors of whole forests of hunters, etc., being made to appear on the walls of an apartment, and then as suddenly to disappear at the pleasure of the wizard jocator, who was therefore deemed to be a much greater conjuror than he really was. Even the old acquaintances of our childhood, Punch and Judy, are of much greater antiquity than is generally suspected, and were frequently set up in the halls of the great barons, to entertain them on a rainy day, when their lack of reading and writing left them very barren of amusements.

On the present occasion, neither the ladies nor the abbot, nor his friend, seemed to feel much interest in these exhibitions; indeed the person most delighted was Grace Bolt, who by the indulgence of the Lady Adela, had been permitted to remain with nurse Cicely and the fool to see the shows. They were now all three standing behind the seats of the grandees.

One of the freaks of the jocator was to dance with his hands on the floor and his heels in the air; nor was the sword dance forgotten. Grace did not much care about this, but she was so enchanted with the last exhibition of the evening, that she almost forgot the august presence in which she stood.

Every now and then she vented an exclamation of admiration, and raised and let fall her hands in wonder, and even jigged a little with her feet to the music, as the dancing apes, dressed in derision, like Saracens and Jews, danced their coranto with an astonishing power of imitation. These sports ended, an amusement of a very different kind ensued; for a troubadour, or wandering minstrel, next appeared with his harp, to the exceeding delight of the more refined part of the assembly. He was altogether a superior person, and was no more to be placed on a level with the vagabond joculars and their troop of apes, than a Catalani, or a Pasta, is to be associated with a beggar who sings ballads along the streets.

The Troubadours, or Norman versifiers were the descendants of the ancient Scandinavians or Scalds. They united in themselves the accomplishments of poet and musician; and so greatly esteemed was the *gai science*, of which they were the regular professors, that nobles and even princes enrolled themselves among the troubadours. These minstrels were also great adepts in the art of Scherazade, that of story-telling. In process of time, however, this art became a separate branch of the minstrel's vocation, and such as professed it were called *Dissours*. The old English poet Gower thus alludes to them:—

When every minstrell had playde,
And every dissour had saide
Which was most pleasant in the ear.

The troubadour of whom we now speak, took the harp, and sang with all the flourishes and science of the period, a romaunt, in the Provençal or minstrel language, about a knight who went to the Holy Land, was made prisoner, and was finally delivered by the means of his lady love, who had followed him thither in a pilgrim's guise.

Whilst the troubadour was singing, Sir Henry de Pomeroy addressed his discourse to the Lady Adela in that silent language of the eyes so often alluded to by the early poets that it seems to have been a studied method of making love in the days of chivalry.

Much as he had heard of her merits, he had no idea that he should find in her a superiority of charms which surpassed either his hope or his imagination, prepared as he had been by the voice of fame to receive a remarkable impression. Her attention being fixed on the troubadour, gave him the opportunity to watch her without giving pain to her modesty,

though she could not for a moment look towards him without meeting his ardent glance of interest and admiration.

She was, indeed, a lovely creature: her form slender, and rather below than above the middle height; small in its proportions, yet so delicate, so graceful in every movement, so light when she stepped, or so easy when she sat, that in figure she conveyed to Sir Henry the idea of a being scarcely woman—of one belonging to a world, if not purely spiritual, yet formed of a clay finer than that of ordinary mortals. Her complexion was of a transparent clearness, tinged but scarcely coloured in the cheeks, with a roseate hue, like the flower called the maiden's blush, among the roses. Her hair was blond, and her eyes of so deep a blue that they might be compared to the ether of a starlight night; whilst her features, soft, small, and regular, altogether produced a countenance, not striking in character (like that of her aunt), but so replete with delicacy and sweetness, that when touched by an expression which arose from the tenderness and warmth of her heart, it was truly beautiful: beautiful both to the eye and to the mind, for it spoke the language of affection in every look. Yet this countenance, so charming, so bewitching, was not one that would have told well in a picture; for its greatest charm lay in its expression, and such could no more be caught by the pencil and fixed on the canvass, than could the varying effects of the momentarily changing and lightly-tinted clouds, at the dawn of early day; for, however great may be the skill of the painter, the finer graces of nature can, indeed, never be copied.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy gazed on the lovely Adela till he was enchanted; and that evening fixed both his hopes and his fate. No longer did the wily abbot's schemes about his becoming possessed of the young heiress's castle, to man it for Prince John, for a moment occupy his imagination. At this hour not the slightest recollection of such matters occurred to his mind. He remembered only that he loved; he thought, therefore, of no other advantage than such as was above all price—that of gaining, might it be possible, an interest in the affections of the woman he adored.

His opportunities, however, were on this the first evening of their meeting but few, yet of those few he lost not one to render himself agreeable to her. Love gave to each trifle an expression that was significant; though only to the eyes and hearts of those who either feel love in themselves, or who inspire it in others, do such trifles appear of import. For the

language of true love often consists more in signs and symbols than in words. It is frequently, like the hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians, a sealed book to all but the initiated.

At length, the Lady Alicia observed that Cædmon was in the hall; she had missed him at dinner; and now, to do him grace and favour, she invited him, with the troubadour, to the daïs. Sending to each by Patch, who acted as cupbearer on this occasion, a cup of wine, and observing, as she did so, that she had heard Cædmon's skill on the harp much commended by my Lord Abbot, and therefore did she pray him to afford her the satisfaction of touching its chords in her hall. The rest of the company, as well as the courteous troubadour, joining in the request, Cædmon complied; and, after preluding a little, sang in a voice that possessed considerable harmony and power, a sacred song, which has thus been rendered into modern language by one to whom we are indebted for many a poetical version.*

THE MINSTREL'S SONG,

He who on death can fix a fearless eye,
And all his threats defy,—
Can laugh at swords, and falchions flashing,
At armour clashing,
Whilst war's wild uproar seems to rend the sky;
Surprise him in a deed of shame
(For virtue oft is but a name!)
Thine eye, e'en like the basilisk's so dread,
Shall strike him dead.

Nay, he who, as a Nubian lion bold,
Could never be controll'd,
Powerless his feelings to dissemble,
With fear shall tremble:
As though an ague bid his blood run cold.
Yes, terror, like a poisoned dart,
Shall pierce his inmost heart.
And say, does not too oft a life of fame
Deserve this death of shame?

Adela, during the singing of the minstrel, took her seat next the Lady Alicia, leaned her head on her shoulder, and, girl-like, put her hand affectionately into that of her aunt. The eyes of Sir Henry, now directed towards the Lady Alicia, could not but see that she seemed to be more moved and disturbed by the singing of Cædmon, than either the song or the occasion could in any way warrant. Her countenance altered, and, with great effort, she appeared to suppress some most painful emotion, which it was quite evident was struggling

* The Rev. E. A. Bray.

within her breast. At length, on seeing she was observed by Sir Henry, she drew herself up, and assumed at once the lofty demeanour which was so natural to her, and harmonised so well with her accustomed calmness and composure. But to a nice observer, like Sir Henry, it was evident this composure was only assumed; that the disturbance within was not appeased. She had compelled herself to make this effort, in order that she might not lose her self-command, or be off her guard in moments when the spirit within becomes impatient of restraint, and is ready to shew itself in all its force.

In a company composed of the higher orders, when the chief person in it becomes embarrassed, or ill at ease, however much such a person may desire, by a more than usual exercise of courtesy, that the circumstances should be unheeded and unfelt, yet it seldom, if ever, fails to throw a chill on all the rest of the party. Even so was it now. The Lady Alicia, uncomfortable in herself, managed, though unwittingly, to make all present feel the same. Everybody, therefore, was glad when the hour of retirement approached. On the morrow my Lord Abbot and Sir Henry de Pomeroy took leave; the latter very ingeniously contriving to borrow a hawk's hood and jessies, before his departure, with a view to have an excuse for soon calling again at the castle, for the purpose of returning them, and of gazing anew on the bright eyes and golden tresses of the beautiful and captivating Lady Adela.

CHAPTER XVI.

For lovers' eyes more sharply sighted he
Than other men's, and in dear love's delight
See more than any other eyes can see.

SPENSER.

WE do not intend to follow up in detail the means by which, with the assistance of his friend the Lord Abbot, Sir Henry de Pomeroiy won for himself such favour at the castle of Wils-worthy, that at length he became a very frequent and distinguished guest within its walls.

In the interval, though the interests of his growing love had the first place in his heart, yet he did not wholly neglect those of the Earl of Mortaigne. Indeed, so far from it, that in this also, assisted by the subtle and ambitious Baldwin, he very successfully intrigued for the cause of the young prince in the west, and meditated, in his own person, the achievement of that exploit which has obtained for him so remarkable a record both in history and tradition, and of which we shall have to speak anon in the progress of our narrative.

But these are matters for future consideration. At present we must once more accompany Sir Henry to the castle, where at the time we open this chapter he was an honoured and a favoured guest. Dearly as the young baron loved Adela, at the period of our tale it was so contrary to all laws, moral or divine, that any one of rank should marry without the consent of parent or guardian, that Sir Henry never even thought of a clandestine marriage with the beautiful young heiress as thing within the verge of possibility. The esteem of the Lady Alicia, therefore, became to him an object of the very greatest importance; as the success of all his hopes must ultimately depend upon her will to favour his pretensions for her ward. Yet it was with the Lady Alicia that he found himself most painfully circumstanced, so difficult was it to decide

in what manner he might be considered by her in reference to his suit. Sir Henry de Pomeroy possessed considerable powers of imagination, and somehow or other the Lady Alicia kept them constantly at work. Her fame for singularity, her reputed deep sorrows, her strange and moody life, were not unknown to him; but the knowledge of these things made him fearful how to act. He knew that to ask her consent to address her ward when he should have openly declared himself for Prince John, might be too late; yet to ask it too soon would be at once fatal to his hopes. He knew, therefore, that in common prudence, he ought to feel something like the certainty of approbation, before he took so bold a step; and yet to find out how the Lady Alicia stood affected towards him, was as difficult to solve as an enigma.

His hopes, his fears, both conspired to make him a close watcher, a very spy upon her feelings and her actions; so that he stood in the strange and novel position of chiefly devoting his thoughts, not to the lady whom he loved, but to her mysterious and reserved guardian, and felt almost as keen an anxiety lest he should fail in winning the good graces of the one, as of the other.

Hitherto, in his intercourse with mankind, the passions of Sir Henry de Pomeroy had been called into play only for the interests of his ambition; and being a bold as well as a brave man, he had seldom met with a difficulty, but, like Alexander and the Gordian knot, he had at once decided on cutting it with a single stroke, rather than to unravel it with patience. But very different was it now, when the passionate feelings of his character were called forth by the interest of his affections. He had no longer the decision of a bold man, who dares at once place his hopes on a stake, and throw for the prize. The fear of losing all he most valued made him cautious; so that he proceeded in that inexplicable line of conduct so injurious to the peace even of the strongest mind, suspecting every little circumstance, weighing every trifling act of the Lady Alicia, and supposing a hidden motive lurked beneath all she did or said, in reference to himself. Even the frankest avowal of her goodwill became matter of suspicion with him. And thus did Sir Henry torture his mind with a thousand apprehensions and alarms, simply because he dared not at once ask the consent of the aunt, and satisfy his doubts respecting the niece.

The scenes which now took place at the castle, we feel it will be very difficult to describe to our readers. For how shall we make them clearly understand an intercourse of looks,

doubts, intimations, and suspicions? Yet in such principally consisted the extraordinary friendship, for so did each call it, which now subsisted between the noble guardian and the knightly youth. We have given a sketch of Sir Henry's conduct; we must here present that of the lady.

Her professions, as we have intimated, were from the first those of friendship. After a while she became reserved with him; so reserved that he fancied she was drawing back from his acquaintance; yet, as Othello says of Brabantio, when the noble Moor first began to cast a loving eye on Desdemona, she "oft invited him." In these meetings, she always made Adela a very secondary person, herself taking the lead; and when she occasionally became reserved, her manner was so imposing that she contrived to throw the chill of ceremony, which led to silence, over all the rest of the party, whilst to the courtesies of society she never failed to pay every attention. Sometimes she would soften into kindness; and though, on the whole, she kept Sir Henry much at a distance, yet, now and then, insensibly as it were, would she suffer courtesy to glide into social intercourse, almost into affection. It was, however, but almost, for whenever she verged towards anything really affectionate in her manner or expressions, she would suddenly relapse into coldness. This change of manner was the more painful to Sir Henry, as it was unaccountable. Yet it never produced in her that pettish irritability, or want of decorum, by any hasty expression, that could be made a subject for explanation or complaint.

Still Sir Henry would not be discouraged: even when in these moods, he would endeavour by gentle means to win her to shew some kindness to him. But though he perceived that in such moments the Lady Alicia was not altogether insensible to his attentions, and that she liked to receive from him a homage to which she had been accustomed from her birth, yet he often felt repulsed and abashed, especially when he conceived her very courtesy was only exercised towards him as a substitute for a feeling of a more warm and cordial nature.

Thus strange and wayward was the lady of the castle.

The observant spirit of Sir Henry de Pomeroy soon taught him that in this singular woman he had to deal with one whose passions were so opposite, so strong, yet so controlled, that the very contradictions they shew, when closely examined, were more seeming than real. There was great variation in her manner, but in her conduct her views were uniform, never capricious, and all her actions had a clear and determined aim.

What might be that aim, therefore, in respect to himself, he now felt desirous to ascertain, ere he attempted to prefer his suit; for well did he know that the very pride of a lofty spirit, such as she possessed, would not suffer her to change, if she once gave a denial to his suit. His only hope, he thought, was to win on her affections; for in the midst of her hauteur and occasional fits of coldness, Sir Henry had detected a sensibility the most marked, that would every now and then bid defiance to all the barriers of pride and self-command. And what was more extraordinary than all the rest, there were times when she appeared to be so much aware of this predominant strength of feeling, that she would seemingly give way to it without an effort at control. At others, when she had occasionally done a harsh thing to one of her attendants, and was really sorry for it, she would not hesitate to indulge in a thousand expressions of the kindest nature; yet, as if she would make a compromise between her pride and her feelings, she would suffer the unkind act to remain unaltered (in cases where it was capable of reparation), whilst she wasted in an effusion of affectionate words the very energy which, if properly employed, would at once have enabled her to repair the wrong.

At length, after a long and most attentive observation of her no less difficult than extraordinary character, Sir Henry came to this conclusion—that she was a woman naturally of the strongest and quickest passions and feelings, but in her general conduct was not so much regulated by them in reference to others as to herself. That there was much of selfishness even in her very virtues; and that she was the victim of some deep and concealed affliction, which was not of a nature to suffer the approach of the world. Indeed, so far was she from seeking any sympathy with her sufferings, she would have repelled the slightest approach to it, or even the slightest intimation that any cause existed for her requiring it, as an insult to her pride. In the male sex, Sir Henry fancied such a character as the Lady Alicia possessed, had it done wrong to another, would have freely accounted for it with the sword, but never by concession.

With Adela he had a creature of quite another mould to deal with. Beneath that modest and seemingly calm exterior, there lurked a capability of feeling not less strong, but accompanied by a very different disposition from that of her aunt. Deep as were her feelings, Adela was generous as well as impassioned, and thought much less of herself than of others, on

all occasions that called those feelings forth. Indeed, such was her modesty, and of so little consequence did she appear in her own eyes, that if a sacrifice were to be made in any matter in which she was concerned, she always conceived she was, of course, the person who ought to make it. With her, obedience was scarcely a choice, on a principle of duty it was so natural to her; and any one having authority, were he so disposed, might exercise it over her in the most arbitrary manner, without even a fear of opposition from the most gentle and passive of her sex.

Though Sir Henry de Pomeroy never failed to remember the warnings of the Palmer, yet such recollections recurred to his mind with but feeble effects. The strange threatenings of the palmer were now remembered, in the broad eye of day, and, by a man in love, with a very different feeling to that which they created when they came before him in the midst of darkness and mystery, from one who was himself mysterious; so that they now no more affrighted him than would the shadows raised by the wand of the pretended magicians of the time, in the old halls of the castle. At length they seemed to him to be little other than the wanderings of an uneasy dream; whilst the doubts he entertained respecting the consent of the Lady Alicia were more real, and so much engrossed his mind, that he could not admit any fears of a merely imaginative nature.

But though love had made Sir Henry, who was naturally of a rash and headstrong character, cautious in reference to the object of his choice; though it had induced him to think slightly of the palmer's warning; and though it had somewhat cooled his ardour for Prince John's concerns, as it excited his energy in his own, it could not do one thing,—it could not induce him to contend with the passion itself for the sake of its object, till after the approaching eve of St. John, when a promise had been given that all doubts should be cleared.

But to contend with any passion had never formed a part of the character of this impetuous and self-willed youth. How to secure its success was, therefore, the sole end and aim he had in view in reference to his love for Adela; and if he watched with inquisitive eyes the Lady Alicia, with no less anxiety did he watch the most favourable moment for pleading his passion with her lovely niece. At length his ardent looks, though furtive and irregular, alarmed a mind so retiring as hers, and she would blush and droop her head, and shrink from such impassioned glances with an excess of modesty that he fre-

quently interpreted into coldness towards him; a thought which added new torture to a soul already on the rack. Then would an expression of sadness overspread every feature of his face, till, on observing some word, some little circumstance of kindness on the part of the Lady Adela, hope would revive, and by its cheering influence dispel the gloom.

Yet, could he have read the heart of Adela, none of these fears would have found a place within his own; for he had gained for himself a deep interest in her affections. Yet, though her love for him was tender, it was of the most retiring nature, and had in it that captivation which none but the love of a modest character can possess: a love which occasionally rose into animation, even into a timid and half-formed confidence, from its anxious desire to please.

Strong indeed must be the feeling that could induce a being so retiring as Adela, on any occasion, to step out of her natural course, her excessive and shrinking bashfulness, to become active and engaging in the social circle, of which the beloved object formed a part, and chiefly with a view, by such a forgetfulness of self, to draw out whatever was most amiable or superior in the object of her regard. So is it ever with the gentler sex: man, in loving, feels anxious for himself, and is satisfied if he is loved by the creature of his choice; but woman, more generous, and infinitely more disinterested in all that relates to the affections, delights not merely in being loved herself by the man of her heart, but in making him beloved in the circle of her family and friends.

Yet, dear as Henry was to Adela, though her love for him could animate her mind, raise her drooping spirits, modulate to the sweetest accents the tones of her voice; though it beamed in her eyes, and in a thousand little things disclosed the hidden feelings of her heart, yet she had not a thought to cherish such an affection, or to let it grow into hope and expectation, without the full and free consent of her guardian, to whom she was bound by so many ties. But all these feelings of caution and timidity on the one part, and of duty and modesty on the other, could not have the force to keep love chained; they could not destroy hope; they could not for ever hold in bondage the inexplicable power of sympathy, which makes the heart that loves, at length, fully understand the bosom that silently responds to its affections.

Had the Lady Alicia been more intimately acquainted with Sir Henry de Pomeroy, she would not long have remained in ignorance as to the real nature of his sentiments towards her

ward. Notwithstanding all his caution, his very change of deportment, would have told her the truth; for he was naturally of a temper almost as haughty as her own; yet love had so wrought upon him, it had done what was little short of a miracle;—that of having made a proud mind humble enough to doubt its own merits, when there was a probability they might be weighed in opposition to its ardent hopes.

Things could not remain for ever thus nicely balanced between the parties; and soon the young people met, as it was natural they should meet under such circumstances, with doubt, and anxiety, but with still increasing love on the part of Sir Henry. On that of the Lady Adela, with a painful consciousness that all was not well with her; with that flutter of the nerves, that embarrassment which, whilst it suppresses much, frequently betrays more: for whenever any strong feeling has once obtained possession of the heart, it is scarcely possible to prevent its declaring itself.

In the company of others, Sir Henry and Adela, after the first encounter of looks and greetings, could support their several parts tolerably well; and with Adela, whose animation was but occasionally called forth, and whose native modesty kept her frequently silent, the task was not one of difficulty. But it was when left alone, that they felt most the embarrassment of their mutual and hitherto unspoken affection. Then would each, whilst but one thought was in the mind of both, find fifty idle ones for the tongue; yet were they such as came slowly from it, such indeed as hung on the discourse rather than helped it forward; whilst any toy that lay in her way, her needle, and what not, gave Adela's fingers something to play with, that she might look down upon them, and avoid the impassioned or anxious glances of Sir Henry; and often, so great was her distress at some word he dropped, at some unbidden sigh which stole from his bosom unawares, that she would blush and tremble, and, if possible, escape from an intercourse that was too replete with deep and suppressed emotions to be other than painful in its pleasures and alarming in its very calm.

At length the feelings of Sir Henry became so intense, he was convinced he could not much longer support a state of so much doubt and suspense, without the very faculties of his mind being much injured, and that he must take steps to decide at once his fate. Still he delayed, still he feared and hesitated; till one day, surprised by an occasion which fortune rather than his own endeavours had made propitious to his

suit, he found himself alone with Adela, at the side of a small fountain in the midst of the park.

The place, the hour, for it was towards the close of day, the blushing embarrassment of the gentle girl, all were favourable to the interests of that passion which filled his soul; and without premeditation, without even a pause to consider the consequences that might be the result, and almost without a purpose beyond that of speaking the overflowings of a heart whose feelings could no longer be suppressed, did he declare how deeply, how sincerely, he had loved. Whilst Adela distressed in mind, shaken in every nerve by the suddenness of the avowal, and too much overcome by her own emotions to struggle against them in a moment of such surprise, could no longer conceal that he too was beloved with a tenderness and sincerity no less than his own.

That hour determined their future fate; as Adela had not scrupled, after this explanation of their mutual feelings, to declare all the rest. She very frankly told him that nothing could be done for them, that the result of their affection would be to feel its hopelessness, and to part, unless Sir Henry could devise some plan to win the approbation of her kinswoman; a thing by no means to be rashly or hastily attempted, for, as far as she could judge, the Lady Alicia had determined on compelling her to take the veil.

It may well be supposed this conversation had the most serious effects on the mind of Sir Henry de Pomeroy; and before he decided as to how he should proceed in regard to the Lady Alicia, whose character and demeanour appeared so extraordinary, he resolved to endeavour to learn something more accurate than he already knew about the history of her early life, and for such purpose he speedily adopted the means of which she shall have to speak in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

The excuse that thou dost make in this delay,
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse;
Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that;
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN situations of doubt, when a danger is at hand that must be fatal to their hopes, men often resort to means to assist them in their efforts to avoid it, which in calmer moments they would reject, as utterly unworthy and altogether to be despised. Even so was it now with Sir Henry. He feared the Lady Alicia would be resolutely opposed to his hopes; and fancied, if it were possible he could but obtain some knowledge of those painful circumstances that seemed to have wrought so strangely on her character, it would in all probability most materially assist him in knowing how to act for the best on the present occasion, and might, at least, prevent his doing or saying anything that would be likely to irritate or prejudice her already disturbed mind.

On mature consideration, therefore, it occurred to him, that the nurse who had brought up the Lady Alicia from a child, and had lived with her the greater part of her life, could not but know something of those extraordinary circumstances, with which the world at large was but imperfectly acquainted; for, though all knew there was a great deal that was mysterious about the Lady Alicia, no one pretended to speak except on the ground of vague, impertinent, or improbable conjectures, as to its cause.

Sir Henry had also observed that Patch (whom he deemed was no more a fool than he chose to be for his own interest), was fully aware of the influence which this favoured servant had with her mistress, and therefore paid his court to her with sedulous attention. It was with Patch, then, that the young knight condescended to hold a conference. Bribed by a largess (with the promise of a still more considerable recompense did he succeed in the service required at his hands),

the fool willingly received from Sir Henry all the necessary instructions, as to how he was to proceed with Nurse Cicely, to gain from her whatever information he could obtain respecting the history of her lady. Patch's curiosity was not a little raised on his own account; and having soon after made an occasion, that led to his being invited to sip a cup of wine in the nurse's apartment, he very gladly availed himself of it to carry forward the purpose he had in view.

"A good-morrow, to you, worthy dame," said the Fool; "fine weather this for the hay harvest: the rain, last night, came down as fresh and as soft as the tears of a young maiden, or of such a tender-hearted woman as you, Nurse Cicely. It will make the young grass spring up with a plenty that will rejoice the heart both of man and beast. For the farmers will have a good crop, and the cattle a bellyful. Times to rejoice in these, dame; the very birds seem to understand it is so, by their chirping and singing, as merrily as if St. Kewen was praying for the laying of their eggs."

"Good lack!" said the Nurse; "and what did he pray for? Swans' eggs, I trow, a rare dainty."

"No, good dame," replied the Fool; "St. Kewen was an Irish saint, and favoured the laying of eggs in a very different manner; for one day, when he was praying, holding out his hands at the window of an upper chamber, a pretty little swallow came and laid an egg in one of them; and such was the patience of the good saint, that he never stirred from his position, till the pretty bird had built her nest, laid all her eggs, and reared her little family of flutterers. And no doubt, nurse, a person so wise as yourself must know, that saints who favour birds are the especial protectors of noble persons. Our Lady Alicia, for instance, is said to be protected by St. Colombe and his dove—I dare say you remember to have heard, how the doves flew about at the hour of her birth. No doubt you know, likewise, all about her wedding and her troubles, and her crosses, for such a discreet woman as you are must have been very much trusted."

"Why, yes, to be sure I was," replied Cicely; "and as to remembering my Lady Alicia's birth, alack! I shall never forget it. It fell, of all days in the year, on the eve of the assumption of Our Lady. I was then a young thing, and a comely, and as merry as May; and had for my bachelor, Walter the baker, that was Walter the baker of our household; for I lived with my Lady Alicia's father and mother; and noble Normans were they, seeing that my Lord came over with

Duke William, and fought in the battle of Hastings, and had lands given him, and his name written down in the Battle Abbey roll, and moreover——”

“I understand,” said Patch, anxious to cut short this long story, “you lived with them, and according to the Norman custom, you became milk-mother to my Lady Alicia.”

“Milk-mother to my Lady Alicia, and I never married in all my life! What may you mean by saying such a thing as that, Master Patch? You do not mean, I hope, to refer any scandal to my innocence,” said Dame Cicely, fanning herself violently. “My innocence,” she continued, “I would have you to know, was never yet suspected by man, woman, or child. In my young days, all your sex were afraid to come near me. I was, as I may say, a very tigress in keeping up my own consequence, and that all the varlets knew; and so they kept their distance.”

Patch, alarmed lest he should have unwittingly offended, apologised, saying he had forgotten she had never been married; and, no wonder, for he could scarcely believe how so comely and discreet a person should have remained single till now.

“I must say it was my own fault,” replied Cicely; “and you are not the first man, Master Patch, who has wondered on seeing me, that I kept single to this time of life; not that I mean to say that it’s a time of life out of the usual way. There are many older than I in the world that have not laid aside all thoughts of changing their single state, I warrant.”

“And why should you do so, dame?—you who are so likely a person, and so well to do in the world?” said Patch, in a tone of earnest compliment, very like advice from a friend, which happening to chime in with the humour of the advised, is sure to be well taken. “Why should not you think of a change, some time or other; I see nothing against it.”

“Nor I neither, Master Patch,” replied Cicely, completely led back to her good humour; “only that nobody has very lately seemed to think about me; and that’s some obstacle to one of our sex. Women can’t speak out their minds without blushing, on such matters, unless to a particular friend, and to such a sensible man as you are, though you are a fool, Master Patch;” and Dame Cicely fanned herself very gently, and looked very lovingly as she spoke.

“Oh, no fear of your blushing to me, dame!” said Patch; “there’s no occasion for it.”

"I'm glad to hear you say so," replied she; "and as you are such an honest and such a sensible youth, and so much my friend, I may tell you what I have saved in my service by the bounty of my lady, who is a very free giver. I am worth twenty marks in gold; one hundred and ten shillings; one hundred and seventy esterlings; and two hundred and forty pennies that make up the Tower weight, five bezants, and nineteen zantines; twelve pieces of household stuff, seven kirtles, and odd furniture both for body and house. And that of my money, some is in real coin, that was paid by the tale; some to be valued *ad scalum*, as the Jews are most like to value it; others by increment,—you see I have the names and ways of increase and money matters at my tongue's end; others again must be taken *ad pensum*, and I may say that, take the whole, it would bear the trial of combustion; and that me and mine would make a fusor worthy the king's exchequer."

Patch was perfectly astonished, even dumb, before this recital of Dame Cicely's wealth, and began to doubt whether the old nurse was not about to take up the Jew's trade of usurer, so ready was she in every mode and manner of reckoning, valuing, and proving the coin of the realm. Still, what could all this mean by being addressed to him? He gave a shrewd guess when she added, looking very tenderly upon him —

"Walter the baker could do nothing with me, though he followed my heels as constantly as his own dog did his basket of loaves, for many a long year. But Walter was not such a proper man as you are, Master Patch; he had not half your sense, though you are a fool. But I have it here," she added, laying her finger on her forehead; "there is some judgment in my experience; I know how to distinguish, how to choose a man; and though there be a score or so of years difference between us, why, it is not much matter, as long as there's a fancy. And, as you say, I'm a comely body; and, as I say, with twenty marks in gold, and a hundred and ten shillings, and a hundred and seventy esterlings, and ——"

Patch, perfectly alarmed by this sudden and violent attack upon him, cut short Dame Cicely's enumeration of her wealth, which, with all her personal pretensions and simple cunning, she had sense enough to know was the most captivating charm she possessed, when endeavouring to win a man, who in point of years was young enough to be her grandson, instead of her husband. At length the fool said very civilly:

"Most excellent and respected Dame Cicely, with all thanks for your good-will, I must tell you, though I am a fool, I am not yet fool enough, nor knave enough either, to bestow my folly, at the suggestion of my roguery, upon such a wise, staid, and worthy person as yourself. And trust me, dame, don't tell every fool you meet how much you are worth; for, may be, all would not take wit enough in their folly to be honest men, and let it pass free. For, trust me, good Cicely, there are more men in the world that have a thumb to put into their neighbour's sack, than the miller, who has become a proverb for taking toll for his own dish. I honour you, as I would my mother, or my grandmother; I don't say you are old enough for both, but good enough for either; and so, most discreet Cicely, we will be excellent friends, but think no more of billing and cooing like a couple of doves in the cote. Let us rather talk of old times, and of thy mistress, the Lady Alicia;" and then, with a little more cunning flattery and persuasion, Patch brought her round to the mood he most desired. "Thou didst speak of her birth just now," added the Fool.

"Ay, marry did I," said Cicely; "well do I remember the day she was born: why, I had the babe in my arms ere it was an hour old, and as fine a child it was as ever was seen. I was called to my lady by Margery, the bower-woman; it was on the eve of the Assumption; and a great company were we to have in honour of the day at the castle. And I was busied among the maids, seeing all things put in right order, and giving out the sweetmeats for the cooks, by reason that old Rebecca, who had charge of them, was sick, and I helped Rebecca, for she and I were bedfellows, and had our pittance together, and ——"

"You were nurse to my Lady Alicia as soon as she was born," said Patch, anxious, if he could, to get over the particulars of the birth of the child, which he had heard fifty times before; "and you lived with her ever after."

"Ay," said Cicely; "I was the child's nurse from the birth. But, as I was saying, I was busied among the maidens, weighing out the sweetmeats and the comfits, and giving fifty orders to the one and to the other all at the same time; as, how the gold comfit-box was to be sure to stand before my lord; and how, when the cooks handed round the capons on the little spits, the Norman way, to the company, they were to be sure to hand them first to my Lord Abbot—Abbot Stephen that was then,—that he might have the first slice; for Stephen—

Our Lady rest his soul, good man!—would as soon have none at all as not have his own cut of the capon's breast; and right and proper was it, for churchmen should go afore other men, even great barons, in all matters of respect."

"But the babe," said Patch, "what of her all this while?"

"Why, as I said, I had her in my arms before she was an hour old; a finer child never came into this world of sorrow and of care," replied Cicely; "the very picture of its father; it had its father's pout with the lip, pretty dear; ay, 'twas as like as one pea is to another; and it cried lustily as soon as it was born; and it did my heart good to hear it, for I knew it was lucky. And though its father seemed vexed when he heard that his lady had brought him a little maid, for he would have had a man-child; for he wanted an heir male to his lands; yet, he said, he would not murmur at God's sending, and so, giving me a bezant for bringing him the news, he bade me go my ways, and send to him Master Simon, who was star-wise, and our family conjuror, for all great barons in those days kept an astrologer in their household. Our lord and chief was earnest to know what would be the fortunes of the new-born babe."

"And did Master Simon, the astrologer, predict any of those sad chances that have happened to our Lady Alicia?" said Patch; endeavouring by so leading a question to make the old nurse fancy he knew much more than he really did; hoping it would induce her to talk the more freely about the matter. Nurse Cicely, however, needed no additional stimulus for gossiping; in that respect she somewhat resembled a child's top, that needs but a little whipping at the first to put it in motion, and when once fairly set going, will run on till it has quite spent itself in whirling. She thus continued:

"Why, I can't say, Master Patch, that ever my lord told me exactly what the astrologer said would be the fortunes of my lady; though I am certain he predicted something; and so I used to think, when all those terrible matters came to pass."

"Ay, I thought as much," said Patch; "such things as they were, you know, Dame Cicely, never could have happened without being foretold."

"To be sure, I thought so, and said so," replied the Nurse; "for, says I, there's nothing comes to pass without the stars; and so, though I knew nothing of what had been foretold, I considered it as all fulfilled when my poor lady became such a sufferer."

"My life upon it, you were in the right, dame," said Patch; "she could not have met with those singular sufferings and events, you know, without the assistance of astrology."

"Nor could she have met with her husband neither," said the Nurse.

"Certainly not," answered Patch.

"And such a husband, too!" exclaimed Cicely; "such a comely, noble, handsome man, as was the Lord de Beaumont, very wild, though, in some of his ways; and folk did say he went up to London town and followed the court, and neglected my poor lady, and left her here in the castle all alone by herself; and she loving him as never before woman loved man—it was enough to make her mazed."

"It was so, indeed," said Patch; "but how know you it was true?"

"Why, only because there were those who said so, and said they knew he was false to her, and would swear it upon the four Gospels, with relics put under the books of them: nobody dare take such an oath as that, unless it were true."

"I don't know," said Patch; "the world's very bad, and every day grows worse; there are few honest men now-a-days but what are counted fools, and that's the reason, I believe, that I am accounted one of them."

"Many people are accounted what they are not," said the Nurse. "But, as I was a telling, there were many strange things happened about my lord and my lady, that I could never exactly come at the bottom of. And, somehow or other, my lady mistrusted my curiosity, and fancied I wanted to know more than she chose to tell; and so she took occasion, as you will hear presently, to send me out of the way, just at the time there was, I believe, most to be known, had I stayed by her."

"No doubt she feared your shrewd wit and observant eye," said Patch, "if there was anything to conceal."

"Ay," replied the old dame, "and that there was something to conceal, nobody shall ever persuade me to the contrary, though I can't exactly guess what it was. But I am sure there was a something; but all I knew was this ——"

Patch perked up his ears, listened with the most fixed attention, and prepared to have his curiosity most fully satisfied, when the Nurse abruptly said, "What time of the day may it be, think you, Master Patch? for sure 'tis time for me to go wait upon my lady."

"Not so, good dame," replied Patch; "we will not part till I have finished this cup, and you your pleasant story."

"Well then," continued the Nurse, "my Lord de Beaumont came home to the castle at last, and brought a dear friend with him, a very great baron, and he and my lord were what is called brothers in arms; and they loved each other like brothers in blood; and so they lived together for some months in the castle; and hunted and hawked, and revelled and tilted, and gave banquets, and nothing was like it. But somehow or other, I soon observed that there was something wrong between my lord and my lady. I could not tell what, for both were very strange; and the friend went away, and my lord soon after him; and both were busied in making preparations for the Holy Land. After they were gone, my lady became more strange and moody than ever; and did not go to mass, nor beyond the domain of the castle; but often went, as 'twas said, to a cell of mortification she had built for herself in the woods, and there she would let no one go with her: till, at last, I thought she looked so ill, and rested so ill, and seemed always in a fright and a flutter, and never smiled, and was so lost in thinking, that if anybody spoke to her, she often did not seem to hear them. Well, at last, I, who had been her nurse from the cradle, took on me to tell her how sorry I was to see her in such a way; and I asked if anything ailed her that I might know of, and if comfort was not to be had by good counsel. But she treated all I said as nothing but my fancy, and told me she had uneasy thoughts about her lord, who was at that time absent in the Holy Land. And soon after, she told me she was under a vow that would oblige her to travel, as a poor pilgrim, to some of the shrines in Cornwall; and that she was determined to go, and to take with her only a Norman woman, whom she greatly trusted, as the attendant of her pilgrimage. I was to remain at the castle, have the keys of all the stores, and keep order there till her return."

"And how soon did she come back again?" inquired Patch.

"You shall hear anon," said the Nurse: "she almost, as I may say, stole away from her own castle; yet we all knew she was under a vow for the sake of my lord's safety in the holy wars, and was visiting all the shrines for him. Well, away she went, and no tidings came of her. I did my best, and kept the keys, and looked well after the maidens and servitors in her household. At length we grew uneasy at such a silence, and such an absence, and began to fear something had happened; when, all at once, my Lady Alicia came home,—I shall never forget how; it was a thing enough to make one mazed to see it, and to remember it."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Patch in surprise.

"Let me make an end of telling it," said the Nurse: "she came home attended by a stranger, quite different to what she went out, with only one bower-woman. And as she dashed over the drawbridge, for she was on horseback, and the bridge had been lowered to let her pass into her own castle, she rode like one who cares not for her own life, or for the neck of the horse. I marvel she was not killed, considering the spirit of the animal she rode, and how she rode him. He reared whilst on the bridge, and I screamed at the sight, for I saw her from a chamber of the gatehouse; and we all thought that she and the horse would have fallen from the drawbridge into the moat below, and be dashed to pieces before our eyes; for the moat was then dry, by reason of the drought; and we all hurried to meet her, and to give her a welcome home, in the outer bayle of the castle."

"And then you learnt what had chanced?" said Patch.

"Yes," said Cicely: "never shall I forget it; how she looked!—how she spoke! She was as pale as a corpse, yet there was not a tear in her eye; but I saw the lids move in a quick, short way; and her lips, that were marble white, trembled like a quivering leaf. She saw that we were all frightened at her looks, and were afraid to speak. She threw the reins upon the neck of the horse, tossed her arms abroad, as if frantic, and looking upward with a wildness in her eyes that made her seem to be something fearful,—something scarcely like a woman,—clasping her hands together, and exclaimed in a voice that made all shudder, with its shrill and piercing tones, 'Oh, my people! I return to you a widow; your lord, my husband, is dead!—dead! he has fallen in the Holy Land; and I live to tell it! He was slain, not in battle, but by —' She could add no more! she had hitherto made a great effort to keep in her feelings, but they were too strong for her. She would have dropped from the horse had not so many sprang forward to help her. She was carried senseless into the castle, and there she lay for two months, sick almost to death, and I tended upon her."

"And after her recovery she went to Normandy, did she not?" inquired Patch.

"Not immediately," replied Cicely; "she was at first for giving herself up to grief and despair. She dismissed with a largess the person who, it seemed, had met with her on the way when she was returning from her humble pilgrimages, and who it appeared, was then coming to the castle, to tell

her of her lord's death. She gave herself up to the deepest sadness, took no pleasure in anything, and saw only godly men; yet not even then her usual confessor. She would wander for days together in the woods, or go to her cell, and let no one follow her to that retreat. At length, a letter came from Normandy, to say how ill was her brother, the Lord de Marmoutier; and that he wished her to come over to him. My Lady Alicia immediately quitted England; her brother died soon after; and we, her people of this castle, saw no more of her for above sixteen years; for she made pilgrimages, and stayed in Normandy all that while. We heard, however, that the Baron de Marmoutier had left as his heiress an infant daughter, whose mother had died when she was born. And we heard likewise that our Lady Alicia, by buying the wardship of the king, had become the sole guardian of her deceased brother's orphan, the Lady Adela, with whom she, at last, returned to England."

"Yes," said Patch; "that happened just after the house-steward had shewn his good sense in appointing me to be wise man, or monitor, commonly called Fool, because fools like children speak the truth, to the family; thinking, no doubt, a pleasant, agreeable, lively person, might help to dispel the megrims, if my lady should happen to bring home any of her old melancholy moods with her from Normandy."

"It is all very true," said the Nurse; "he took you as family fool, in the hope to divert her; for though she is not frantic in her fits of grief now, as she used to be when my lord's death was new to her, yet she is sad enough still; and a most constant widow she has been, mourning her lord's death like a bird that has lost its mate. Nobody ever won so much as a smile from her, by way of encouragement, when they wanted to woo her, might he be prince, baron, or knight. Oh! she is a true one, or there be no truth on earth."

"And the Lady Adela, what think you of her dame?"

"She is very dutiful to her aunt and guardian; and I am sure that my Lady Alicia wants to make a nun of her. And if so, there will be a fine windfall, by way of inheritance, for the religious houses; for neither of our ladies have any heirs male, and unless one of them should happen to marry——"

"Which, by your account, nurse, neither of them is likely to do," observed Patch.

"I don't know that," said Cicely; "I have very lately altered my mind in that particular. Have you never observed some things of late?"

"Ay, many things; but what do you mean?" said Patch.

"I have something here," answered the old Nurse, touching significantly her forehead, "something which seldom fails me. I have wit truly under the bone, wit to see and to judge, and that makes me think my Lady Alicia is mightily changed of late. Do you mark nothing with that fine young knight, Sir Henry de Pomeroy?"

"Nothing but courtesy," replied Patch.

"Courtesy!" exclaimed the Nurse, "a crota's end for such courtesy, say I. Courtesy, forsooth; marry now, to my thinking, it is love!"

"Love!" exclaimed Patch; "love! why the Lady Alicia is more distant to Sir Henry, and at times shuns him more, than she would a stranger. Call you this love?"

"I do," said the Nurse; "'tis the way with us women. We often seem not to affect what we love best. And have you not marked that, within these two or three days, how much she is altered to my young lady?"

"How so?" said Patch.

"Why thus," answered the Nurse: "I was coming out of the grange, whither I had been to shew Tim the miller, our new bower-maid's father, our stock of corn, when, who should I see gliding down the green alley but Sir Henry de Pomeroy and my young Lady Adela; and she was hanging on his arm, with her eyes bent on the ground, whilst his were seemingly fixed on her face, and he was in earnest discourse with her. They did not see me; and next I saw him take out a rose, that was in her hair, and he kissed it, and put it in his own bosom. And so, thinking no harm, when I returned to the castle, I told what I had seen to my Lady Alicia, and said what I thought it looked like."

"And what said she?" inquired Patch.

"You should rather say, what looked she," replied the Nurse; "for, truth to tell, she did not say much. But she looked! I shall never forget how. She looked for all the world as if she had seen a spectre; or rather as if a viper had suddenly come across her or stung her. I thought she would have swooned outright, as she said faintly, 'I never suspected such a thing as this; I thought it improbable, impossible!'—'La! my lady,' says I, 'how great folks may be out, when us simple ones are in the right. But who, my lady, could see such a fine young knight as Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and such a sweet young lady as my Lady Adela, always together, and not suspect them of falling in love? Why, my lady, for them

not to do so would be contrary to nature.' 'Contrary to nature!' said my Lady Alicia, repeating my words, and looking so aghast as she stared at me, as if she did not half understand what I had been saying: and I, seeing her surprise, I said— But, Holy Mary protect us! there's her call; she is ringing her handbell for me. Do not say a word about what I have told you to anybody; for I am no gossip, and never talk of these things to anybody but to such a friend as you." And so saying, Nurse Cicely left him in all haste to attend upon her mistress.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Oh, most adored ! oh, most regretted love !
Oh, joys that never must again be mine !
And thou, lost hope, farewell ! vainly I rove,
For never shall I reach that land divine,
Nor ever shall thy beams celestial shine
Again upon my sad, unheeded way.

MRS. HENRY TIGHE'S *Psyche*.

THE sudden summons, which broke up the colloquy of Nurse Cicely and Patch, came from the Lady Alicia, who directed the former to seek out forthwith the Lady Adela, and tell her that her aunt required her attendance in her private chamber on the instant.

Adela obeyed, and her own consciousness of having done wrong, in allowing the declaration and returning the affection of Sir Henry without her guardian's approval, made her detect at a glance, on coming into her presence, that she was summoned by the Lady Alicia to receive some admonition respecting the very subject that was uppermost in her thoughts. She trembled, and with some difficulty made her way to a seat that her aunt pointed out to her; there she sat in profound silence, not daring to look up, to meet her guardian's eye; but hung down her head, and played with the end of one of the long plaits of her hair, that fell in front over her bosom.

The scene which followed was extraordinary; for, though obedient, submissive, gentle even to timidity, and of the humblest spirit, Adela loved Henry; and, notwithstanding her deep convictions of duty, she was too young to be wholly insensible to the charm which, more or less, will ever attach itself to forbidden love. The very tyranny of those circumstances by which it may be thwarted stimulates its energies, and the more it is opposed, the greater will seem the value of the object for which it contends. Hence it is that love indulged

sometimes grows cold, but love opposed retains all its fervour. But, although alarmed, and almost confounded, by a summons so unexpected, whilst agitated by that secret conviction, which acts like a presentiment for good or evil in a heart so alive to its dearest interests, there was, nevertheless, such a character of ingenuousness, of simplicity, in Adela, that no circumstance could conquer her natural disposition to speak frankly the feelings of her heart. It was not, therefore, how to avoid the avowal of the truth, but how to speak it so as least to offend her guardian, that now occupied her thoughts. In every other respect she was too guileless to think at all about the manner of acknowledging her affections; she only felt timid, ashamed, as all very young persons do, as if they had done wrong in loving at all; whilst to make the acknowledgment before one who, calm from want of sympathy, might listen to it with indifference, appeared to her as something fearful.

To add to her embarrassment at this moment, it struck her, as her eye glanced on her guardian, there was something very remarkable in her countenance and demeanour. The Lady Alicia sat somewhat stiffly in her chair; her person, always majestic, was now raised; and the most perfect self-possession and composure were apparent in the air and manner with which she spoke but a few words, as Adela took her seat. Yet there was a something; Adela could not exactly have defined in what it consisted, which convinced her that all this was the result of a strong resolution, taken up on a high ground, with a determination not to flinch from its object, though it was one likely to be of painful interest to both.

"Adela," the Lady Alicia commenced, and then made that short pause which becomes emphatic when a conversation of moment is about to ensue; "Adela," she repeated, "it has been communicated to me,—it matters not by whom,—that you have allowed an approach to an intimacy, the object of which cannot be mistaken, on the part of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, without my sanction; certainly without my suspicion. I ask you if this be true?"

Adela burst into tears; she could not utter one word in reply, but continued to weep, and to wipe her eyes with the end of her veil.

"You do not deny it then," said the Lady Alicia; "for I cannot but interpret this silence as an admission that I have been told the truth. You are not aware of the vortex of misery into which you would plunge, did you meditate a

union with Sir Henry de Pomeroy. But it is my duty to save you from it, and that I shall perform, whatever it may cost me. I had other and higher views for you, Adela, and not even your own folly shall disappoint them: I therefore demand a promise from you, that you will see Sir Henry no more,—think of him no more,—love him no more.”

“Oh, my dear and honoured guardian,” exclaimed Adela, “think what it is you ask of me! Could I obey you, you should not need to repeat your commands. See him no more! Alas! wherefore? He is good and noble; even you have spoken his praises as warmly as he deserves. See him no more!—yet even that I might do,—but to think of him no more, love him no more, that I could never, never do—since, I fear,—I”—she sobbed so much she could not continue speaking.

“This is but the weakness of a girl’s love,” said the Lady Alicia. “It will give place to time and discipline. I shall send you away from Wilsworthy; absence and good counsel will do all that is required; and in a few months, nay, in a few weeks, you will think no more of this foolish affection. It will yield to time.”

“Yield to time!” exclaimed the enthusiastic Adela; “O my guardian, can a virtuous affection pass away so soon, and be as if it had never been? Time may change many things, but it will never change my heart. I thought the good never altered when they loved those who were good; I thought that all just affections were enduring, and that to change was disgraceful—the first step to dishonour.”

Adela’s voice faltered with emotion; she looked up—her eyes met those of her aunt—a strange sympathy appeared to be awakened by this encounter of looks. Each seemed to read the mind of the other; both became confused. The words which hung on the lips of Adela, to finish what she had begun, died away in accents too low to meet the ear; and Lady Alicia answered only by her eloquent looks and disordered gestures. The moment was a crisis; she became white as monumental marble, trembled, breathed a short breath or two, then made an effort to speak, but no word followed, as if the blood which had forsaken her cheeks had been driven back upon the heart by the sudden impulse of fear; again, however, it rushed in a full tide from its retreat, and overspread her face and neck with deep blushes; whilst maintaining a spirit too lofty to tolerate the idea that anything Adela had uttered should even seem to give a sudden

pang to her bosom in reference to herself, she glanced her eye proudly upon her niece, and said, "Foolish girl! the sight of your distress shakes even my firmness; but it must not be. I will neither yield to pity nor to remonstrance. You must give up this folly; conquer this foolish affection."

Deeply as Adela was interested for herself at this moment, the singular appearance and demeanour of the Lady Alicia awoke, even in her young and inexperienced mind, a train of thought in which she had never before indulged. Long as she had lived with her guardian, and much as she knew of her eccentric character and habits, the idea had never before struck her, and it now rushed upon her mind so confusedly that it surprised and almost overpowered her. Could all the sufferings, the eccentricity, the strange mode of life, the faults, the very virtues of her guardian, could they be the result of secret sin—of deep and undying remorse?

The suspicion was an extraordinary one for a girl so young, so innocent, to admit; but, if true or false, it rushed upon her in a manner that was to herself almost unaccountable. She was aware that nothing could be more obvious to those who lived with the Lady Alicia, and indeed it was generally known, that she was a most unhappy woman; in this respect there was no discovery to be made: but the cause of that unhappiness was a very different thing, and a young and artless mind, such as Adela possessed, unaccustomed to the world, and the petty motives which will sometimes excite the deepest passions, was more likely to be struck at once with the sight of the genuine emotions of an alarmed conscience, than would be one who is more versed in observing the complicated artifices of the world. Again did she ask herself the question—could any such alarm of conscience be the cause of what she had just witnessed?

These thoughts, however, were but momentary, and they speedily passed away. Yet so far was she from feeling discouraged, that the newly awakened impulse gave her a painful interest in the conversation that followed, independent of herself, such as she had never before experienced. And this feeling called up in Adela a degree of courage that will sometimes be found to assert itself in timid characters, when raised above their ordinary emotions by the influence of the circumstances in which they are engaged.

With an earnestness therefore that surprised even herself, she pleaded boldly before her guardian, in behalf of Sir Henry, his high birth, his honourable distinctions, his affections; and

asked on what grounds, as her guardian, she could object to her receiving his suit.

Lady Alicia paused for a few moments to recover herself, and then stated some general objections, but none to the purpose; none such as Adela could consider at all satisfactory or conclusive. She still, therefore, entreated her kinswoman to state more specifically her reasons for insisting on the dismissal of so noble a suitor. Such a persistence on the part of the usually timid Adela, and her aunt's unsatisfactory replies, at length became so painful, that their further conversation was embarrassing to each. In this discussion, however, Adela possessed that advantage, which could not fail to make itself felt, of having told her secret in a plain though bashful manner—she had nothing to hide; and as her object was direct and avowed, her language was ready and simple; till, roused into further contest, it soon became emphatic from the sincerity of those feelings that gave her courage to maintain her cause.

With Lady Alicia it was quite different. She had not been in any respect candid; she had kept something in reserve, so that she could not support her part in the conference with equal promptness and ease. She frequently contradicted herself, and often marred what she would say, by the very fear she might say too little or too much. At length the pertinacity of Adela compelled her to adopt another line of conduct; and seeing she would not be satisfied without some reason stronger than those already given, she told her plainly she had objections to Sir Henry de Pomeroy that were insurmountable, though of a nature she could not wish to communicate to her niece. Adela must consequently be satisfied with her assurance that they were so.

Thus, the unhappy girl had no resource but to appeal to her aunt's compassion, that she might not be compelled to renounce a hope, on which she avowed all her future happiness must depend, whilst the reason for compelling that renunciation was withheld from her knowledge.

For a moment Lady Alicia seemed to fluctuate between an intention to withdraw and leave her niece to herself, or to remain and speak to her more openly than she had hitherto done. She adopted the last resolution; yet not without an effort. She rose, took two or three turns about the room, gave a piercing glance at Adela, as if she would read her inmost thoughts, and then placing her hand on her brow, stopped, closed her eyes, and for a moment appeared to be absorbed in

the intensity of her own reflections. A shudder seemed to come over her whole frame, as suddenly starting from her position, she came up to Adela, took her hand, pressed it vehemently, and with a countenance that, as an index to the mind within, bore the fearful characters of impassioned feelings, she thus addressed her:—

“Oh, urge me not, — do not ask me to speak it, — do not drive me on that rock, or we are both lost. Believe me I speak truth, — believe me that I, who seem to destroy your hopes, would, with life itself, secure your happiness. But oh! think not of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, or you are undone. Misery, ruin, death, nay, worse than death, would be the consequence of such a union. Think of him no more,—speak of him no more; he can never be yours. You must never meet again.”

Adela, though at the first overcome by an alarming sense of surprise, now endeavoured to utter a few words; but the Lady Alicia would not permit her to speak; and looking upward with an expression that had in it something appalling, she called on heaven to witness her resolution that Henry de Pomeroy and Adela de Marmoutier should never meet again. There was in the manner in which she expressed this resolution an energy of looks, words, and gestures, that would not admit dispute. Adela was silenced, but not convinced.

“It is for your sake that I forbid this unhappily placed affection,” said the Lady Alicia. “Yes, Adela, I, who now seem to make you wretched, I love you dearer than life. But I would save you from the worst of evils—the pangs of self-reproach,—and such would be yours did you disobey my commands. Follow the path of duty, and it will lead to that of peace: wander from it, and you are lost; in vain would you endeavour to retrace your steps. Obedience is the law of God; all things are bound by it in heaven, or on earth; obey then, and be happy.”

“I have never wilfully disobeyed you,” said the weeping Adela; “but duty hitherto has been an easy task.”

“And now that it is opposed to your own heart, it is grievous,” said her Guardian. “Yet should you now cease to respect my authority, my commands, no after repentance could repair the evil, and too late would your own conscience upbraid you for the act. Think of that.”

“I will obey you,” said the trembling Adela; “yet you know not at what a price; you know not the strength of the affections you would kill at a breath,—would I might die with them!”

"Do I not know what it is to suffer by the strength of the affections?" said the Lady Alicia. "Look on me, Adela; am I not widowed and heart-broken? Am I not bereft of every hope? do I not suffer beyond even the conception of ordinary sufferers?—yet I live."

Adela at this moment reproached herself for the harsh thoughts she had for a moment entertained about the Lady Alicia; who thus concluded her exhortation to the fulfilment of her duty: "Keep thy conscience, Adela, at peace within thy breast, and no ill shall reach thee. All else may be borne, for conscience comes to us as an angel to speak peace; but if we obey not her dictates, she will turn to an avenging spirit. We must wear her olive or feel her sword. I have noble views for you, my dearest Adela: I seek to make you the bride of heaven. But not now will we speak of this. Go to your chamber, compose your disturbed spirits, and meet me in my oratory, ere I go to rest. Farewell."

So saying, as if fearful to trust her own resolution to continue a conversation of so much interest, she suddenly broke off, retired, and left Adela to her own sad thoughts.

CHAPTER XIX.

My innocence
 Shall stand triumphant, and your malice serve
 But for a trumpet to proclaim my conquest:
 Nor shall you, though you do the worst fate can,
 Triumph over him whom innocence protects.

MASSINGER.

It was in the abbey church of Tavistock that the cellarer, sentenced to undergo ordeal, was to submit himself to the judgment of heaven in reference to his innocence or guilt in the charge concerning Grace Bolt.

The ordeal in question, a common one with the monasteries in Brother Thomas's day, was not to be carried forward without due solemnity; the preparations for it in the church had for some time been going on, and the assembly expected to witness the ceremony was likely to be numerous.

There was a simplicity in the abbey church at this time, which rendered the grandeur of its proportions even yet more imposing; whilst in the lights and shadows of a building whose pillars were bold and lofty, and whose arches were at once broad, bold, and sweeping, there was a solemnity of character well suited to the feelings of the devout. The abbey church was also very ancient; and of Gothic buildings, as of trees, it has become a common observation, that, unlike most other things, they improve with time, and increase in interest as they grow in years.

In the edifice of which we speak, there was much to admire, and nothing to condemn. The clustering columns, the gorgeously decorated altars, illumined with a thousand tapers burning bright; the glow of its windows, the coloured light streaming through them on shrines richly jewelled, and decorated with the most gorgeous ornaments and reliquaries; the capitals of the columns, grotesque in their carvings, often consisting of men, animals, and chimeras, were all of a striking character, and of boundless variety in their execution and design. The sculptures were more particularly so, for Saxon

kings, buffoons, princes, knights, and angels, many of the latter playing on the crota or fiddle; saints in martyrdom, or saints in heaven; even pigs (these surrounding St. Anthony in the midst of his temptation), with every other extravagance, in or out of nature, that the brain of the Saxon architect could devise, by way of embellishment, were to be seen in this church. Indeed, so strange had been his fancies, that they seemed as if they could alone have been suggested by the nightmare having disturbed his repose, in order to favour him with visions of the monstrous. Some portions, however, of these early carvings were scriptural. In such the Jewish princes and prophets of old were made to figure as Saxon kings, in chain mail, and Joshua and David went to battle, bearing the red cross, like knights to a crusade.

Notwithstanding all such absurdities, there was much in the ancient historical carvings to instruct the poor, when the subjects were strictly scriptural. In this way the unlettered and the ignorant could read his Bible, much the same as a Mexican formerly did his history, or his letters of important news, by a series of pictures presenting before him a graphic announcement of whatever was most of import or interest in his concerns. But if there was much to instruct the Saxon laity, there was also much to delude them in these early monkish carvings.

In our abbey, for instance, might be seen representations of purgatory; monsters with gaping mouths, vomiting flames, or swallowing down the souls driven into them by the pitchforks of a parcel of little devils with red horns, cloven feet, and long whisking tails. In one of the paintings in the church (for several decorated its walls) might be noted a monk with his shaven crown, pulling some poor soul, by main force, out of limbo. This picture was suspended over an altar, in one of the lateral chapels, with an almsbox beneath, by which those who could not read the admonitory inscription above, might receive a hint not to be misunderstood, that all who desired the prayers of the monks to draw their deceased friends out of purgatory, must not grudge their contributions to the church and the poor.

Besides the Gothic absurdities already mentioned, there were several others, not a little amusing, here to be found. Such as representations of some of the well known characters in the sacred mummeries, or mysteries of the day. Even the Feast of Asses, and of Fools, which was always performed in the church, here found a record.

We have only further to notice the magnificent rood, seen in the centre of the nave, and rising towards the vaulted roof, above every other image, cross, or emblem of the Romish faith. The tombs and monuments were also striking. The sculptured figures and characteristic effigies of saints, abbots, princes, and warriors, were, for the most part, carved with such exquisite art, that they seemed to give life and animation to alabaster, brass, or stone. Indeed, all within the building was of interest. And the long aisles, with their diversity of light and shade, having in them that air of mystery so calculated to touch the fancy, and to create feelings of awe, as the eye endeavours to trace distinctly, amid their sacred gloom, many an object which seems to pass before it undefined, were altogether most impressive.

The very rites of an ancient superstition, when performed in such a place, had in them a spell that was potent. Here the terrors of the ordeal rose before the mind invested with all the power of an offended justice, ready to launch its thunders on the head of the offender. Here the worst fears frequently overpowered the imagination of the sufferer, as they seemed to his disordered senses to be the whispers of the unseen spirits that hovered near.

August as were the ceremonials of the ordeal, yet the behaviour of the laity, and even of some of the clergy, when assembled to witness them, was frequently anything but devotional. More especially at this period, when the too easy rule of a successive number of indolent abbots and priors had suffered the regulations of the godly St. Bennet to fall into as absolute neglect in the abbey of Tavistock, as Vincentio complains had those

“ Strict statutes, and most biting laws,
For terror, not for use,”

which he was so desirous his deputy, the Lord Angelo, should take upon him to enforce, during his supposed absence from Vienna.

That one of the brothers of our abbey should be now under sentence of the ordeal of bread and cheese, was so great a novelty, that all the town and all the country flocked to witness the strange sight. Curiosity was the chief motive, to see if Thomas the cellarer would be able to come out of his trial, on the charge of his supposed unlawful love for Grace Bolt, as clearly as Joseph had done in Holy Writ, after he was cast into prison on a most false and injurious charge.

Our worthy cellarer, as we have already seen, had availed

himself, on permission, of my Lord Abbot's own cheese for the matter of the ordeal. Truth to tell, Brother Thomas was much too prudent to choose any such compound from the dairies of Devon, on which to risk the test of his honesty; famed as those dairies were, and still are, notwithstanding the excellence of their cream, for producing cheeses as dry and as hard as a stone wall.

At an early hour the multitude pressed to the church; and its long aisles and gorgeous altars presented a scene the most varied and amusing. Whilst the people began to assemble within its walls, the priests were going through some early service, in a manner that partook too much of haste to be devotional; whilst many of the brothers were busy whispering together, or nodding, or looking about, or hearing the news; in short, doing anything but paying attention to the hastily said matins. Novices were seen setting up and lighting great wax tapers; banners were unfurling, and an immense piece of tapestry was unrolling, previous to its being suspended from column to column down the centre aisle.

As to the people, there was no end to the motley throng, or the improprieties of their behaviour. It seemed as if they were come to witness some piece of buffoonery, or the freaks of a jongleur, instead of the ceremonies of an ordeal so solemn as the bread and cheese.

Amongst the peasantry assembled, and assembling, were many farmers and yeomen; and bordarii, even ploughmen, serfs, and villains joined the throng. These talked of their cattle, their oats, corn, and hay, just as they would at a market. And two or three huntsmen came in, with their dogs' leashes in hand, instead of their beads, and their hounds at their heels; and these latter intruders, when one of the singing boys attempted to turn them out, began barking and snapping, and opened a matins that startled the old women, who occupied their favourite and accustomed station round the pulpit stairs. Some knights and nobly born youths strolled carelessly in, one of them whistling, and bearing, like the rest, his falcon or sparrowhawk on the fist, as the right of nobility; and those of a lower grade, who wished to ape the manners of the higher orders, and yet dared not violate the laws by carrying a hawk, as a piece of affectation carried on their wrists a cuckoo, whose wings had been cut, and so "paraded their fopperies," even before the very altars of the church; and so, as old Barclay says, who notices many similar indecorums of this date, in his satirical verses, they had

"Even as great devotion as a gander."

Many a sot, with bleary eyes, and a reeking unwashed face, strolled in from the taverners, to stare stupidly at what was going on; and some came to shew a tawdry coat, and many a licensed fool to make as much disturbance as his weak head and jangling bells could produce from the cap of folly that surmounted his ears. These leered at the silly girls, and gave them a jest out of a ballad, or an idle tale, or a song. There were two or three clerks, learned in the canon, as well as in the civil law, who, with eager faces, moving heads, and gabbling tongues, stood wrangling and disputing, and laying down the law of ordeal, each in contradiction to the other; as if the life not only of Thomas the cellarer, but of the whole convent, depended on their settlement of the matter. And then they made such a quibbling about the word cheese,—if it ought to be understood to imply a whole cheese, or only a piece of one,—that had the cellarer been destined to take the ordeal after the fashion in which they contended it ought to be taken, it would have puzzled even the saint in whom he most trusted, to get him clear of being choked in the process. And then the softer sex were not a wit less curious than the more sturdy, in satisfying their fondness for novelty. Great ladies came, attended by their bowerwomen, pages, and bowmen; and the wives of small tradesmen thronged in, wearing their kirtles of serge and their hose of scarlet, with their feet thrust into wooden-heeled choppins that clattered on the pavement as they shuffled along, adding by their movements to the strange and heterogeneous combination of sounds that rang in the ears. The younger damsels tittered and giggled and stared at every thing they saw, and yet with little reverence, even at the very images, that were dressed out on purpose for the high ceremonies of the day.

Though there was all this disturbance, the lateral chapels and altars dedicated to the saints were not deserted. Many a silver-haired old man, and many a good old woman, with their beads in their hands, were seen kneeling, sometimes in a company before an image, saying an *Ave Maria* or a *Pater Noster*, in a sort of low humming tone, like bees in a hive.

At length the hour arrived for the high ceremonial of the day; and the abbot appeared, attended by his chaplains, pages, and the vestiarius: he was attired in the alb, robes, and cope; the jewelled gloves and the ring were on his hands; on his head he wore the small mitre, and bore the

crosier himself. As soon as he was robed the bells struck up a peal, and immediately after he entered the church. The prior and precentors followed their superior, also attired in their robes of state. Baldwin with a dignified step, advanced up the nave; Cædmon, the Saxon, bore his train, and all present threw themselves on their knees, as he passed, not attempting to rise till he was seated in his stall. Soon after the bells ceased, the abbot rose and began the service of the day with the *Deus in adjutorium*, and after the chanting of many psalms, at the commencement of the *Magnificat*, Baldwin put incense into a silver censer, and the prior and chaplains assisting, proceeded to the high altar, where the bread and cheese was laid out, and according to the custom of the time, blessed it for the ordeal.

And now appeared on the stage the chief actor in the scene, upon whom all eyes were turned, being no other than Brother Thomas, the cellarer, dressed in his plain monk's hood and gown. He advanced with a cheerful air, nothing doubtful nor dismayed, supported, like the lion and griffin of a coat of arms, by the stout sub-prior on the one hand, and the shrewd sacrist on the other. Sir Simon, the curate, his accuser, following, supported by a couple of secular priests.

Brother Thomas next proceeded to kneel down before my Lord Abbot, who, whilst the prior held the silver plate with the bread and cheese in his hand, prayed over it to the effect, that if Brother Thomas might be guiltless of the thing laid to his charge, heaven would make his innocence apparent in the face of all that assembly, of "churchmen and laymen, men and angels." He then presented to Brother Thomas the sacred dish. The cellarer very readily helped himself to a nice looking piece of cheese, and a small portion of wassail-bread, newly baked, that it might not be dry and stick in his throat, so as in anywise to interfere with the judgment of heaven.

But highly as the expectations of all present had been raised, the ceremony they were so anxious to witness was one of very short duration, having, like a ship-launch, most, if not all its interest, in the bustle, the preparation, and the excitement of the day, the animating spectacle of such a body of people collected together, and all under one exhilarating impulse. Yet not quite so rapidly as a noble vessel is launched from her cradle to breast the waters, did the ordeal proceed. Brother Thomas went about it leisurely. He stood right facing my Lord Abbot, near the altar; there he opened a

mouth that was none of the smallest, and commenced munching, apparently with considerable relish, the precious morsel, and finally swallowed it down as smoothly as if it had been no more than pure cream; and lastly, with a superfluity of courage and generosity, he offered to take even another slice, if Sir Simon, the accuser, and all present, were not fully and perfectly satisfied with the innocent nature of his most fatherly, or rather brotherly, love for Grace Bolt. But to this second test he was not to be exposed: heaven had done its part; Brother Thomas had been triumphantly carried through his ordeal, for not even a hem or a cough had interrupted the perfect ease with which it was performed; and being first embraced by the abbot, prior, and sub-prior, with most hearty affection, the former presented him to the whole assembly, and with the acquittal of heaven, gave him the benediction of the church.

Then rose the Latin chant, and the deep and swelling notes of the organ burst upon the ear of the assembled multitude with the finest effect, as the whole building rang with praises and thanksgivings to Him who in so signal a manner they considered had vouchsafed to shew His mercy and truth to a servant of His church. The abbot next gave the general benediction, and the congregation dispersed. Sir Simon, the curate, stole away, completely disappointed and crestfallen, but cherishing a little store of anger, which he intended should meet with the interest of increase, against Brother Thomas, for another and a surer day. The worthy cellarer was accompanied, in a sort of triumph, back to the common hall of the monastery, by the good-humoured and most satisfied monks, and all was joyous commotion both within and without its walls.

Abbot Baldwin alone lingered in the church; he frequently did so after service, to discuss matters of business with the claustral prior. On this day it so chanced that he continued much longer than usual in conference with him and the vestiarius; and, as it was the duty of the abbot to sit, two or three times a week, in the cloisters, to hear the confessions of the monks, who there approached him for the purpose of disburthening their souls of their secret sins, our abbot was about to take his seat in compliance with this duty before he returned to his own apartment. But as he was passing down one of the aisles to quit the church, so singular an event occurred, and of so much importance to our history, that we must mention the circumstances at large that brought it about, and therefore do we give them a place in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XX.

Dark and unearthly is the scowl
That glares beneath his dusky cowl;
The flash of that dilating eye
Reveals too much of times gone by.

BYRON.

IN one of the lateral chapels of the abbey church, lighted only by a painted window of such deep hues that the rays which stole through it were insufficient to dispel the gloom that hung around, there stood, above an altar-table, the image of St. Mary Magdalen, plainly attired, and crowned with cypress and yew. Large beads formed of glass, to represent tears, were seen upon her cheeks; a human skull was at her feet, and her altar was likewise decorated with rosemary and bay, and all such evergreens as were held sacred to sorrow, penitence, and death. In this chapel there was also a confessional, with a number of hair-shirts, crowns of cypress and thorn, disciplines, palm branches, and tokens, the offerings of a vast variety of penitents who had here distinguished themselves by the severe penances to which they had submitted in expiation of their sins. The chapel was known by name of the *Dolorosa*, as well as by that of the Magdalen.

At the foot of the altar, and before this image of penitence, after the multitude had retired from the church, there kneeled, wrapped in a plain and dark volupure, with every outward mark of the deepest humiliation, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont. Her hands were clasped palm to palm, her head raised, and her eyes, dimmed with tears, were fixed on the image of grief and misery that was before her, as she devoutly repeated a part of the ritual more especially chosen for occasions of penitence and prostration both of body and soul.

While she thus kneeled, the Lady Alicia was disturbed in her devotions by hearing a long and heavy sigh that seemed to be drawn from some bosom near her. She looked round,

and to her surprise observed, close to the Gothic screen (which was covered by a curtain, and separated the small enclosure from the body of the church), a tall figure, dressed in the habit of a palmer. Seeing that he bore with him his bourbon and a withered branch of palm, she immediately understood that he was come hither, according to his vow, to offer both (a very common custom) at the altar of penitence, on his safe return from the Holy Land.

She could not distinctly see his head, for he wore his cowl so forward, and his gown so close about the lower part of his face, that scarcely was there anything to be seen but a long and silvered beard, and a portion of the cheeks and mouth. It was the common remark of the time, that there was such an overshadowing and penthouse form in a palmer's cowl, it was as much calculated to conceal as to protect the head of the wearer.

The lady felt disturbed at his presence, yet wherefore she could scarcely tell; there was nothing remarkable in the sight of such a person, at such a place. But the cause of her disturbance arose from her own thoughts. She had been engaged in that intense contemplation of the past, in that state of feeling which preoccupies, but does not calm the mind, when outward things become visionary, and inward ones alone real. In that painful calling up of the past, which makes us live our years over again only to feel all that has become bitter in their progress,—in such moments how does the iron enter into the soul of the penitent! Deep, therefore, and tumultuous as had been the emotions of the Lady Alicia, she was naturally and easily disturbed by the presence of a stranger; and she trembled in every limb as she arose to give place to this new comer at the shrine.

"Stay, lady," said the Palmer, addressing her; "let me not disturb your devotions; I come but to make my offering: I will straight retire." So saying, with a reverent air, he placed his bourbon and palm upon the altar-table, knelt before the image, and remained for a few minutes in silent prayer. He then turned again to the Lady Alicia, and said—"Go not, lady; I would speak with you ere we part. May be, I would ask somewhat of you."

"If an alms," replied the Lady Alicia, "for the sake of the holy places the poor palmer has traversed sea and land to visit in Syria, take this, pilgrim, and welcome." She took from an almonier, that hung at her girdle, a piece of coin and offered it to his acceptance.

"Keep your guerdon, lady," said the Palmer; "it is neither silver nor gold that I would ask of you: but, perhaps, something more precious—as I would hope to find in you a gentle spirit, willing to receive truth, and to act upon its dictates. Of such a disposition gold may be the emblem, for though it is the most solid of all metals, yet is it the most ductile: even such is a generous heart."

Astonished at a preface like this, the Lady Alicia, nevertheless, signified her willingness to hear whatever the palmer might wish to impart; and added, with that reverence which she really felt for one so newly returned from the holiest portion of the 'globe—"And from you, father, I would crave a blessing, and some tidings of that land which has been so fatal to many a widowed heart in England; where its dearest and its best have perished on those burning and desert sands, or before the walls of their strong cities. You have, perhaps, traversed as far as Jerusalem?"

"Yes," replied the Palmer; "I have visited the holy city, and the blessed sepulchre, for whose deliverance every true knight is sworn to shed the last drop of his blood. Yes, I have wept over that captive Jerusalem, from whose melancholy towers no sound is now heard but the rude clarions of the infidel. I have wandered amid the mountain solitudes of Judea, where all lies under the curse of an offended justice; I have passed cities, like Babylon of old, that now lie fallen and in the dust, where the screaming vulture and the hissing snake, the wild bird of the air and the wild beast of the forest, seek their home; where not a human creature makes his abode; where all is rent and torn asunder, even as an open tomb, as if the last dread trump had rang its peal, and all were risen to the judgment."

"To the judgment!" repeated the Lady Alicia, as if the word had struck upon some chord of deep feeling within her bosom, and called up a sense of unutterable awe.

"Ay, to the judgment," said the Palmer, who observed her agitation, in a voice indicating a degree of emotion little inferior to her own; "does the thought of it shake you?"

"Who may abide it!" exclaimed the Lady Alicia, greatly moved.

"The innocent, the pure in heart," replied the Palmer vehemently.

"And who are they? where are they to be found?" said the Lady Alicia in increased agitation.

"Here," cried the Palmer; "here, at the foot of the cross!"

he seized her hand as he spoke, and led her towards the image of it, that stood on the altar-table.

"Oh! Saints of heaven!" she exclaimed; "and who—who are you—who can thus by a word penetrate the inmost recesses of my soul? and yet your manner speaks to my heart more than your words. You seem to know, holy man, that I am borne down to the earth by unutterable sufferings—sufferings beyond all human aid."

"Give scope to thy penitence, lady," said the Palmer; "you have need to express it in tears of blood, could your heart shed such drops as you have caused to flow from other bosoms than your own."

At the hearing of these words the Lady Alicia became deadly pale, her lips quivered with emotion, she clasped her hands together, and said in that low, short, and emphatic tone, which shews how eager is the desire to be satisfied—"Tell me, who are you? do you know me? do you know aught of my most unhappy life? or is it on the mere general opinion that all who are penitents before this altar must have done injury to some one of their fellow-beings, that you now thus address me? Speak, I conjure you, speak!"

"Ay, I will speak," he answered, "though it be but as the echo to thy accusing conscience: Alicia de Beaumont, I will not spare you. We spoke but now of the Holy Land. There was one who died there, who was once dear to you—have you forgotten the Eve of St. John?"

"You do know me then," she cried in a low and thrilling voice, that was subdued in its tones by the very agony of her fears. Such a tone was like the whisper of the dying—it chilled the heart as it met the ear.

"Ay, lady," said the Palmer; "I do know thee; few so well. Thy conscience tells thee that I speak the truth, though I have but hinted at the fatal tale. Shall I bid thee respect a power that is at this moment so potent within thy breast? I need not; yet what I have to impart will touch it to the quick. It will call forth all thy fortitude, all thy resolution, to make thee act as becomes a penitent—to repair, as far as thou canst repair, at this the last hour open to thee for reparation, the evil, the misery, thou hast wrought."

"Father of Mercy support me at this hour!" exclaimed the Lady Alicia; "what is it I must do? Thy words are death to me. But if one theme is known to thee, holy palmer, as I think it is, spare me—oh, spare me that reproach!"

"The wounds I give are hurts that heal," said the Palmer;

"I wound but to cure, not to aggravate thy sorrows. It is justice, truth, not a spirit of revenge, no feeling that would injure thine, which prompts me to act thus to her who was once the gentlest, the loveliest, and now, alas! the most unhappy of womankind. The call of justice, too, must be heard; justice that long has slumbered, but now has awakened in all her strength. Turn then her wrath aside; obey what she demands, and fear not."

"Speak—tell me what I am thus solemnly required to do," said the Lady Alicia; "and if—yet once more I conjure you, tell me who are you?—you, who address me in a tone and manner that implies menace as well as accusation? But that there is an authority, like truth, which gives such power to your words in all you utter, that something whispers to my heart I must not doubt you, or I had never thus submitted to hold question with one so daring as yourself, so reckless of what I must suffer in these moments."

"It is not my words that shake thee, or that could have the power to touch thee, Lady Alicia de Beaumont," said the Palmer, "did not the heart within that bosom confirm their truth. It is thy conscience that speaks to thee."

"My conscience!" said the Lady Alicia; her pride somewhat roused by these reiterated reproaches.

"Ay, thy conscience!—the echo of God's voice," replied the Palmer.

"It is—it is," exclaimed the Lady Alicia, as clasping her hands together, she fell at the pilgrim's feet, and added, in accents that spoke her total incapacity to struggle longer with the sudden and powerful emotions to which his words had given birth,—*"Say on; I will do all that may be required of me to do right.—Yet but satisfy me in this, how am I thus known to you? where have you seen me?"*

"Oh! ask it not, require it not, lady, at least not now.—How are you thus known to me? Where have I seen you? Oh! where angels have looked on and blessed you, as they watched over your young head;—for you were young then, lovely and innocent; not the bird that has left the parent dove, to spread abroad her wing, was more pure or void of thought of ill. Your heart was tender, warm, and true, as youth and woman's love could make it. All things good and holy were around you; and your father's aged honours were upheld and adorned by you. Soon after you were married, to one who loved you as never man loved woman—with a love more like that which should be paid to saints in heaven, than to a crea-

ture of the earth. That fond, confiding husband—his heart beat true to you,—you were all his joy. He felt, but could not speak his feelings; his eyes alone spoke to yours, as he caught their mild glances, now raised, now settled on the ground. Lady, you were the sweetest bride that heaven ever looked upon. So sweet, you made an Eden around you, in your wedded love. And, like as in an Eden, the great enemy of mankind looked on and envied: misery followed,—need I tell its tale?"

"Speak no more of the past; no more, unless you would see me fall dead at your feet," said the Lady Alicia: "you have riven my heart. I am satisfied; you know, indeed, the truth. There needs no other evidence. Proceed then to the matter, to which all this is but as the opening of a fearful page. Let me have all it may contain. I am prepared to meet it."

"Know it then at a word," replied the Palmer: "one whom you would most fear to meet, and yet, may be, would most desire to see, still lives. The hour approaches when he will appear before you, even as one who comes armed with a higher authority than that of man, to do right to an injured honour and a blighted name. The hour approaches, but is not yet come.—You tremble, lady; you are faint. Shall I pause? shall I go on?—you cannot bear it."

"Speak, speak on," she said; "I have already borne so much this day, I will not shrink from what may yet remain of bitterness. I can, in part, conjecture to what all this tends.—Holy palmer, you would speak of the Lady Adela de Marmoutier. Have I read your thought?"

"You have," replied the Palmer; "it is of her that I would speak. She is sought in marriage by Sir Henry de Pomeroy, the gallant son of the late Lord de Pomeroy. Is it not so, lady?"

This last question was put in a tone that implied some degree of bitter and passionate feeling in the mind of the speaker.

"I know well," she replied, "that Sir Henry de Pomeroy has presumed to entertain an affection for my ward; but I have forbidden it: on that head there is nothing to fear; for the Lady Adela cannot wed without my consent; and that will never be given. I shall prevent such a union."

"You prevent it!" said the Palmer, in a tone of irony; "you prevent a woman, young, fair, and frail, from following the dictates of her own strong and perverse will! What law, think you, can bind the rebel heart of woman?—can hold within its confines her wandering will? or bid her spirit, calm and un-

ruffled, follow in the path of duty, when passion visits it with its tumultuous force, — tears down the barriers of a righteous obligation, and bids it bound forward in its full career of ruin and destruction? Are you, lady, possessed of such a power to govern the human will at pleasure, that you talk thus confidently of making any law of duty imperative with the Lady Adela, when youth and love are prepared to play the traitor?"

"Adela would not, I am persuaded," said the Lady Alicia, "disobey me in this. She knows well the danger, the penalties she must incur for such offence."

"The very knowledge of that danger, the very sacrifice she would be called upon to make, would but make her love so much the more eager," said the Palmer. "Lady, ask me not how I have learnt it; but confide in the truth of my assertion — Sir Henry de Pomeroy, urged on by the vehemence of youthful passion for the Lady Adela, and in despair to obtain her by your consent, has laid a close but sure plan to bear her from you by stealth. Unless you are resolute, no power on earth can prevent her union with Sir Henry."

"That union would be worse than death," said the Lady Alicia; "it would be misery such as my very blood recoils but to think upon. Tell me how this may be prevented: instruct me, — I will delay neither time nor means to thwart it, nor scruple at anything rather than Sir Henry de Pomeroy and Adela de Marmoutier should meet again, as they have hitherto met, in secret affection. Tell me what to do?"

"Dedicate Adela, as the bride of heaven," said the Palmer. "But in order to do this with the certainty of its success, you must make a sacrifice. Can you, — dare you submit yourself to pain? to pain such as no nice scruples may spare you. Ask your own heart what it dare do, and then listen to what must be done."

"It were sin, a deep and deadly sin, to suffer this matter to go forward: to prevent the worst evil, I can and dare do much."

"Ay," said the Palmer, "but dare you do thus much, — reveal the truth to one whom I shall name, and who can alone prevent a union that would be fatal in itself? You have pride, Lady Alicia; can you humble that?"

"What new sacrifice, what new humiliation, must now be required of me, who have already drunk of the cup of mortification, of sorrow, to its last dregs? Is the sacrifice of my life now required? Is that your aim?"

"God gave the spark of life," said the Palmer; "man must not put it out. It is not of life that I would speak. My purpose has not an aim so fearful. Listen: it shall be briefly told. Baldwin, that wily abbot who is leagued with the enemies of Richard, he it is who first proposed and has urged on this rash suit of Sir Henry de Pomeroy to the fair Adela, your unhappy ward. You must confide the truth to Abbot Baldwin. You start and shudder. But remember, the seal of confession is sacred: fear not then to avow to him, as a churchman, the whole truth; and with him you must contrive the means (he will not be slack to find them) to remove the Lady Adela to some convent of a holy sisterhood of nuns, where she may forthwith enter on the term of her noviciate; and ere the time arrives that she shall be vowed as a nun, all the danger of a union with Sir Henry de Pomeroy will be overpast. Dare you do this, as the last, the only means for safety?"

"I will do it," replied the Lady Alicia, in a firm voice; "but oh! at what a price! Not to such a man as Baldwin would I have this matter known. Is there no other way?"

"None," said the Palmer. "Abbot Baldwin and Sir Henry de Pomeroy, by their far-sighted policy, and the success of their deep-laid plans, have all the West at their command. Sir Henry de Pomeroy you will not meet again till it is too late. It is to Baldwin, therefore, the truth must be made known, and by you, for by no other evidence can it be established: heaven demands this sacrifice of you, and by you it must be made."

"I will speak to him," said the Lady Alicia, "though to meet death itself would be more welcome than to encounter that proud abbot for such a purpose. But oh! not thus can I part from you, holy palmer; from you, who have wrung my very heart with the bitterness of your reproaches. Tell me who you are; do not leave me thus unsatisfied; that broken and sad heart has convinced you it may not resist the power of truth. Fear not then to trust it. Tell me who you are; and that you will pray for the unhappy penitent who now craves your prayers."

The palmer turned from her, yet not angrily; he seemed as if he were deeply touched by her words. She thus continued to address him: "Let me but see your face ere you depart; for as it is, you have come before me like a shadow of the night, that visits the care-worn mind in the visions of a feverish dream. You have called up fearful recollections;

you have named the fatal Eve of St. John; you have struck the iron deep into my soul; and yet I know you not! Leave me not thus; say but a word; let me but look upon your features."}]

She caught him by the gown, and in the vehemence of her feelings, threw herself on her knees before him. He made an effort to extricate his gown from her grasp; in doing so his dress was discomposed, and his cowl fell somewhat back. She caught a hasty view of his face, so imperfect, from the sombre light and gloom of the chapel, that the features could not be distinctly seen. Yet, imperfect as it was, there was an expression in the countenance that struck to the heart the Lady Alicia as she thus glanced upon it with an eye of timidity and fear.

The palmer seemed displeased with the manner in which she had so pertinaciously endeavoured to discover who he was. There was a sternness in his eye, a peculiar character in its expression, that conveyed to his pale features and to his haughty brow something terrible, which combined with the resemblance she fancied in the face of the palmer to one who was at that moment in her thoughts, altogether so shocked, so overpowered her, that as he suddenly rushed from the chapel, she screamed aloud and fell with her face on the pavement at the altar's foot. On coming to herself, she found she had been assisted by Abbot Baldwin and the claustral prior, who had heard her piercing cry, as they were passing near the little chapel in their way to quit the church. They had hastened to the spot, where they found her alone and senseless; and not doubting but that the severity of some penance had reduced her to such a state, they threw some of the holy water from the pichina that was at hand in her face; the abbot pronouncing a blessing as he did so.

Soon after she came to herself; she trembled greatly, and as they raised her, ere she could utter a word, the Lady Alicia looked fearfully and hurriedly around, as if her eye sought something, some object of terror, that lurked near her in that place. Baldwin and the prior duly attributed this to the confusion resulting from her yet disordered senses. But they judged wrong; she was perfectly restored to her recollection; and seeing that the palmer was gone, she had self-possession sufficient not to betray the cause of her late distress, till she should first ascertain if it might be suspected. She inquired timidly, therefore, if they had seen any one pass out of the church; to which receiving a negative in reply, she said no

more on the subject; but prayed the Lord Abbot to give her the opportunity, so favourable to her spiritual condition, to make her confession to him, in the chapel of St. Mary the Magdalen, to whom she had made a considerable offering, and she wished to add to it after her confession, before she returned to Wilsworthy Castle. The abbot signified his consent, and the claustral prior took the hint, and withdrew.

CHAPTER XXI.

'Tis ever thus
 With noble minds, if chance they slide to folly :
 Remorse stings deeper, and relentless conscience
 Pours more of gall into the bitter cup
 Of their severe repentance.

MASON.

CONVINCED, as fully as the palmer had desired she should be, of the necessity of removing Adela beyond the reach of any of those violent attempts (so common at the period of which we write), that might be made on the part of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, to secure her person, the Lady Alicia did not for a moment do other than resolve on the painful communication she had been advised to make to the abbot. The difficulty was, how to make it.

She knew well that in Baldwin she had to deal with a man, though he could occasionally for his own purposes play the courtier, who was in the main of a haughty and repulsive character. She knew also that, in order to obtain his concurrence to break the dreaded marriage, she must reveal to him matters hitherto unknown, that would of necessity expose her to his severest censure, and compel her to adopt a line of conduct, from which even the most worthy feel a shrinking—to expose to an ungenerous mind the secret faults and errors of a soul that was originally more noble than itself. And the Lady Alicia, notwithstanding all her penitence, endeavoured to soothe the pains of her self-reproach by laying that flattering unction to the heart, with which human frailty is so apt to reconcile itself to all its derelictions from duty; namely, to say to herself, that in her case there were circumstances which would, if known, remove half the censure due to errors such as she had committed; yet, well did she know—

“Fame will not heed
 The train of lesser truths; but drags to day,
 And shews the shuddering world, all bare and black, the deed.”

She was also aware, whatever there might be of a softening or palliating nature in the offender's own view of the subject, that where the act itself is wrong, it is no easy task to relate in detail those circumstances which led to it, so as to interest an unprejudiced mind in the narration, or to make the offender appear in the eyes of a third person, in the pitiable and extenuated position in which he seems to stand in his own. Another thing, likewise, added to her embarrassment: the Lady Alicia, though she had always proudly resisted whatever might expose her to receiving the direct censure of the world, had not, as we have seen in her interview with the palmer, a hardened heart; she was now, therefore, racked by two very opposite emotions, a keen sense of personal pride which holds the least approach to a familiarity that would trench upon her confidence at a distance, and a desire, nevertheless, so far to maintain an ingenuousness that was natural to her, to avoid playing the hypocrite.

The complicated feelings of which we speak had often caused her conduct and her manner to appear eccentric to those with whom she only casually associated, who knew not the hidden springs and motives of her actions, and that she bore within her mind an ever rankling wound. The cause of this sorrow was ever present to her thoughts, and she applied to it, therefore, even the remotest or most casual observation that fell from the lips of another in discourse; and, by so doing, frequently presented her bosom to meet the shaft which would otherwise have had neither aim nor power to reach her. Such were the daily suspicions of one so keenly susceptible to the value of an earthly fame, that not even her penitence to heaven, which should have rendered her careless of it, could give her that calm indifference towards the world, that is numbered among the many blessings attendant on a humble and contrite heart. But hers was rather a tortured than a humbled mind; for even at this moment she endeavoured to rally her spirits, and on the very eve of self-accusation and of shame she was gathering around her heart those defences of a stubborn resolution, that would render her very confession a proud one—a confession of general human frailty, rather than of individual guilt; a confession that should be made in a manner to let the abbot see it was to the priest, and not to the man, she now addressed herself. This was, in fact, the yielding of one proud spirit to another, which mingles a sort of defiance with its very submission. How different from the temper of mind in which she had met the admonitions of the

palmer! But in him she had been touched and subdued by the energy of a lofty spirit, and the unsparing sincerity of an honest purpose: thus proving in herself, that a strenuous and a candid mind can more frequently achieve a conquest over the proud heart, than when pride alone opposes itself to pride.

Baldwin, who had long entertained some deep-laid schemes, by which he was desirous to obtain certain advantages from his acquaintance with the Lady Alicia, inwardly rejoiced at what he fancied would be an opportunity to give him a more than ordinary influence over her. In what way that influence might be established, he could not exactly tell, though, could he have chosen, he would have wished most to influence her by fear; the favourite ruling principle with all selfish and tyrannical persons. He knew also, that with so proud a spirit, fear was the motive likely to give him the most influence over her. Mankind, he knew well, easily shake off the memory of their obligations, but seldom of their fears.

The Abbot had said little in reply to the Lady Alicia's request to hear her confession; indeed, nothing more than to express his readiness to do his duty as a spiritual person: he then remained silent, wishing her to take the lead in this discourse. Baldwin was not ignorant of the advantage which is gained in making the party to be used as a tool, commence with laying himself, or herself, open (so as to become placed within the power of an artful opponent), unsought. Such a line of conduct was like getting the bird to fly into the net, instead of giving it a wound in order to ensnare it.

The Lady Alicia, on the other hand, wished as much as possible to spare her pride the pain of stooping; she wished something like encouragement to proceed from the abbot; but not a word escaped him: his demeanour was cold and thoughtful, his countenance stern, and subtlety seemed to lurk in the furtive glances of his close and contracted eye.

"It is not, I believe, unknown to you, holy Father Abbot," said the Lady Alicia, "that my ward, the Lady Adela de Marmoutier, has been sought in marriage by the young Lord of Berry Pomeroy Castle."

"An honourable person," replied Baldwin; "a knight of approved valour; of an ancient house, and one who is in himself complete in all the qualities of an accomplished gentleman."

"He is all you say, holy Father," answered the Lady Alicia; "and yet there are circumstances—I must add, fatal circum-

stances—which render my consent to such a union impossible. It is on this subject I would confer with you, that I would seek your counsel; for which purpose I would make known to you, under the seal of confession, certain matters connected with my own family, in years now long past away, that must be painful for you to hear, but most painful for me to relate. Though to hear of the errors and the frailties of human nature can never surprise a churchman, more especially one whose devotion to the cloister, to comfort and console the penitent sinner, and by searching into his own heart to learn the weakness and wickedness of mankind, has made it a duty to listen: an examination which must shew him that most creatures, like himself, are liable to fall, and that all are equally sinful in the sight of Him who is too pure to behold iniquity.”

Abbot Baldwin, not at all complimented by the manner in which his penitent prepared him for her confession, by indirectly reminding him how necessary such a duty might be to himself, darted upon her an angry glance. It passed away, however, without the accompaniment of a hasty word, as he recollected that policy required he should not now take offence at anything she said. Yet his brow became clouded, and there was something which indicated an unbending spirit, as he told the Lady Alicia her wishes should be complied with, and that before he entered further on the subject in question, he would at once receive her confession.

He led the way: the confessional was within the chapel. It was of richly carved oak, and consisted of four sides, one of which stood against the wall; the lattice-work that composed the upper half being covered with black curtains; the central compartment opened to admit the confessor, who took his seat in a chair placed within; as the penitent, kneeling on some steps, before a grated partition on the right side, without even meeting the eye of the priest, could pour into his ear the confession of those sins of which she was desirous to be absolved. Near the confessional stood the altar of St. Magdalen we have already described, and immediately above it arose the painted window, the deep colours of whose glass rendered the light of day, which it as much intercepted as admitted, so dusky and gloomy, that all within the little chapel was in shade, except where the wax tapers set up by penitents burnt before the shrine, and shewed the image of the saint and all the melancholy decorations of her altar, by an unpleasing and almost unearthly glare: a glare which is always the character of an artificial light, when mingled with the light of day.

It was at this confessional, kneeling, trembling, fearing, yet never shrinking from her resolve, that in a low impressive voice and manner, the Lady Alicia poured into the ear of the haughty and subtle prelate that confession which astonished even him; accustomed as he was to have laid bare before him, in that very place, the secret thoughts of the heart, and often to have opened to him, in its most fearful page, that dark volume of human passion, which, to the eye of the common observer, is as a sealed book.

We will not lift the veil of the confessional; we will not disclose those feelings and events which, told to the church, were, by the religion of the country and the period, held inviolable in their secrecy to all the world besides. We will rather proceed to state what followed the confession.

The duty ended,—the Lady Alicia arose from her knees, dropped her veil more than it had been before over her face, crossed her hands on her bosom, bent her head, and stood for some few minutes silent, as if engaged in thoughts too deep for utterance. She was now perfectly calm; but not so Abbot Baldwin. He came forth from the confessional an altered man; cold and haughty as he was by nature, there was disturbance, even marks of strong and deep emotion, in every line of his face.

He turned hastily towards the Lady Alicia; he prepared to speak to her unceremoniously, with somewhat less of his accustomed deference, for he thought to find her humbled. He was, however, mistaken, and the first glance of his eye told him that he was so, and that her pride was unabated. She had sunk into reserve, as a defence against that approach to familiarity, which is sometimes the immediate consequence of having, by our own lips, unfolded a truth calculated to lessen us in the esteem of another. Her demeanour seemed in unison with her mind at this crisis; for, as Baldwin paused for a moment, surprised by a character he had hitherto so little understood, she appeared to him, when he recollected the confession he had so lately heard, like one who having offended deeply, with the pride of a spirit resolved to rest on its own strength for support, stands aloof from all the world, and despises every other stay.

"Lady," he said, seeing that she remained silent; "lady, the disclosures of this hour have been fearful. But" (and here the abbot ventured to touch on his spiritual authority) "far be it from us to bruise the broken reed, or to quench the smoking flax. Yet we must not give the full absolution of

the church till such time as the penances we have enjoined may be completed."

"All you have commanded, holy father," said the Lady Alicia, "shall be fulfilled. Where was it that you directed me to perform the last acts of penitence? I have forgotten, in the many shrines you have named, where I must make my prayers and offerings in Cornwall."

"At the chapel of St. Michael's in the Mount, on the Eve, to you the most fatal Eve, of St. John, must you bow the knee in deep humiliation and in penance for your sins. On the Eve of St. John many penitents resort to the sacred shrine in the holy Mount, for a like purpose; and thither must you go, before you can receive at my hands the absolution of the church. Respecting the donations to the monasteries and holy places, we will instruct you at leisure."

The Lady Alicia bowed her head in token of assent to these instructions.

"And now, as touching the Lady Adela," said Baldwin; "no time must be lost in the disposal of her person. Holy Mary! how has this hour changed all our views. Well may we exclaim, with Holy Writ, that we know not what a day may bring forth! Follow my instructions, and all shall be well. I had thought to see the Lady Adela the bride of my noble friend, Sir Henry de Pomeroy; but now must she be, indeed, the bride of heaven."

"Yet would it not be harsh to force her will, holy father?" said the Lady Alicia. "Might not a temporary retirement within some obscure cell be all that need be done by us, to estrange her from him, and so to break all hope of this most unhappy union? True it is, that I have often wished to see Adela an espoused sister of the holy church in a convent of nuns. Yet my heart would fail me when it came to the point of separation from her, unless her own free will desired such a change. Adela was ever averse to it; and now, alas! her engaged affections would not suffer her to become a willing votress; and to communicate to her the cause of our breaking such affection in its infant bonds, is impossible: she must never know the truth."

"Never!" said Baldwin, "unless she were first the espoused of heaven. The necessity for concealment would then cease."

"She shall never know it from my lips," said the Lady Alicia, with something of her accustomed haughtiness. "I will never give her the knowledge of such facts, as might

shake her obedience to myself; or induce the Lady Adela to adopt a line of conduct that I could not pardon."

Thus spoke the Lady Alicia, forgetful that the cause of this indignation (for a supposed possible offence in her ward, did she know the truth) was one which should have covered her own cheek with the blush of self-reproach; but too often did this most unhappy woman feel anger where she should have felt shame.

"Yet," she added, "I would, as far as it may be possible, leave Adela free to act for herself. I would dedicate her, but I would not bind her to the altar, as if she were a sacrifice to be offered up upon it."

"It is a fearful necessity," said Baldwin: "yet, after the facts you have this day disclosed to me, I can see no other way for safety. In this world, daughter, we must sometimes, if we desire to gain a better, consent to do a seeming wrong, in order to secure a certain right."

"Yet surely," said the Lady Alicia, who had not, like the wily abbot, either the sophistry or the hypocrisy to make her argue wrong into right, whilst she did that which was evil—"surely, to force an unwilling votress to make vows at the altar, which her heart refuses to ratify in the sight of heaven, must be a deadly sin. I will never force vows such as these on the Lady Adela."

"I will not counsel it," said the Abbot, who was too subtle not to see that if he attempted to drive his point beyond a certain limit, he might lose the possibility of ultimate success in his too great eagerness to secure it. "Hear what I would advise, lady," he continued: "be secret and be speedy; and till these present difficulties are overpast, place the unfortunate Adela, as a novice, in a sisterhood of holy nuns. Her will cannot then be forced, and in all probability, before the period of her noviciate is expired, the example of those around her, and the sanctity of the place, will have so reconciled her to a life devoted to heavenly things, that she will herself both desire and embrace it."

"Should she do so," replied the Lady Alicia, "the most earnest wish of my heart would be fulfilled. I might myself be induced to follow her example."

"You would do well and wisely," said the Abbot; "and, as you have no other heir than the Lady Adela, who is herself an heiress of great wealth, think how glorious would be the memory you would achieve for yourselves here on earth,—how bright your crown in heaven, did you, renouncing all the

riches and pomps of this world, dedicate your vast possessions to the church,—yourselves to God. But not now will I urge this matter; I do but mark out to you a course, which a penitent so illustrious as yourself, lady, will need no counsel of mine to follow up and to adopt in due time and place.”

“I will think upon it, holy father,” said the Lady Alicia; “but of Adela, where can I bestow her,—in what convent, for safety?”

“Where she shall never more meet Sir Henry de Pomeroy,” replied the Abbot, “the friend to whom, till this day, I had most desired to see her wedded! such are the turns of fate! so sudden, so unexpected! I will point out to you that honourable retreat where her mind shall be prepared for a devoted life, and yet its vows be never forced upon her.”

“Do this,” said the Lady Alicia, “and I am bound to you for ever. To prove to you, holy father, that I am sincere, I will consent to that measure you have of late so earnestly solicited,—that I would place my Castle of Wilsworthy in your hands, to be principally manned by the vassals of the abbey, and to be made as a fortress of defence in case that civil strife, now so fast gaining ground in England, should extend itself to the West, and endanger your own safety. Will this satisfy you?”

This was indeed a victory; to gain possession of the Castle of Wilsworthy, to garrison it with his own followers, was a point the subtle Baldwin had long and earnestly laboured to accomplish, but hitherto in vain. His apparent motive had been to gain a retreat for the security of the aged and persecuted members of the church, whether clergy or laity, in these times of civil strife; but his real motive was to obtain possession of one of the strongest castles of the West, so that he might, whenever needed, place it at the devotion of the Earl of Mortaigne and his rebellious cause. Elated by the prospect, and eager to follow up a multitude of projects to which this new acquisition would give birth, Baldwin hastened to bring the present interview with the Lady Alicia to a close. With an energy of manner, such as he seldom displayed, he boldly and decidedly gave her his final counsels for the immediate disposal of her unfortunate ward; who, from this time, he determined not to lose sight of, till she should become a nun, and have bestowed all her immense possessions, under his own direction, on the convents of the West.

“Lady,” he said, addressing with much earnestness his

penitent, "I have a sister who is abbess of the nuns of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall. I will recommend to her care the young and beauteous Lady Adela. My sister will be vigilant; she is strict, as the superior of her house,—strict, but not unkind. I will write to her, and apprise her what to do. Believe me, there are means to work upon the will, and yet no harm done; such means as wholesome exercise of discipline, of authority, that can frame the mind of the young to give a willing consent to a holy purpose. Three days hence, under a guard for safety, but with the utmost secrecy, let the Lady Adela commence her journey to the Mount. The utmost caution must be observed, for should Sir Henry de Pomeroy know your intent, be sure of it he will intercept the men-at-arms who may form her guard, and, if all other means fail, will attempt by force to possess himself of the person of her he considers his affianced bride. Adela once placed in safety at the Mount, I will warrant all danger is at an end. I know well the temper of my sister; she would as soon suffer the degradation of her own power, as a novice to be torn from her grasp."

"But she will be gentle to Adela," said the Lady Alicia; "no harsh means——"

"Fear not," said the Abbot, interrupting her; "and you will yourself have the opportunity to visit her in her noviciate cell. For you, as I have but now directed, are to finish your penitential pilgrimage in the chapel of the Mount, on the Eve of St. John's day. In the interval, effectually to destroy all hope of this most fearful union, Adela must be removed; all depends on secrecy and despatch, those twin spirits of enterprise. Do this, lady, and do it without delay; then fear not, for heaven will bless a purpose so holy and so just."

The Lady Alicia signified her assent, and bade adieu to Baldwin. Soon after she hastened back to the castle, where she lost not an hour in making those preparations for the removal of her ward, which, in fact, were no other than the first steps towards making the unfortunate Adela a prisoner for life.

The abbot also quitted the church, and retired to his own apartment, where he immediately set to work, and busied himself in writing with his own hand several letters, all more or less connected with the many and deep-laid schemes he had in view.

The first of these epistles was to Sir Henry de Pomeroy, persuading him to undertake forthwith a mission to the castle

of a baron (an adherent of the Earl of Mortaigne) in the north of Devon, so that he might be out of the way till the fair Adela was removed and secured. Secondly, he wrote a long letter to his sister, the abbess, a hard-hearted woman, of a temper as stern and as cold as his own; giving her such instructions relative to his views respecting Adela, as were calculated to place her under the most severe and sure control.

CHAPTER XXII.

Oh, nothing now can please me,
 Darkness and solitude, and sighs and tears,
 And all the inseparable train of grief.
 Attend my steps for ever.

DRYDEN.

Oh, take me in, a fellow-mourner with thee.
 I'll number groan for groan, and tear for tear;
 And when the fountains of thy eyes are dry,
 Mine shall supply the stream, and weep for both.

ROWE.

THE course of our narrative now obliges us to take our reader once more to Wilsworthy Castle, where, in a small turret-chamber of one of its old towers, there sat weeping the Lady Adela, as her new bowermaid, Grace Bolt, who had already been won by her sweetness and gentleness dearly to love her young mistress, was making some necessary preparations for that journey so repugnant to the feelings of both.

Grace, whose kind heart felt more for her lady's distress than for her own, for she was to be the companion of her banishment to St. Michael's Mount, tried all her simple arts at consolation, though, like many comforters of higher degree, she often touched on topics which tended to irritate rather than to soothe the wounds of the sufferer. "Well now," said Grace, "Holy Mary and all the saints forgive me! I never think of being shut up in a convent, without thinking that I shall be a great deal more wicked there, than ever I had been in the world."

"You should not think so, Grace," said the Lady Adela: "my aunt says it is the only place where I can ever become fit for heaven; and she adds, that I have been so wrong in thinking about Sir Henry de Pomeroy, without her sanction, that —"

"Away with such reasoning," exclaimed Grace warmly:

"wrong, quotha, for thinking of the tallest, and the finest, and the sweetest young gentleman that eyes ever looked upon on a summer's day! May be, our lady aunt thinks of him too much herself, to let you have peace in your thoughts about him. We are not all blind, I trow, though we must all be dumb on such matters about our superiors. But I do not care a rush, and I will speak. I say it is a wicked place for us, that convent we are going to."

"Wherefore wicked?" said the Lady Adela.

"Because, my lady, we can't thank God for sending us there. And though I am but a poor man's daughter, yet I know a discontented mind, in rich or poor, is often in a way to become more a wicked than a good one; for it begins with being dissatisfied with God's care of us, and what He does for us."

"Then, Grace, we ought not to be discontented."

"Ay, my lady, ought is a word oftener and sooner said than acted upon; for we ought to do many things that we can't do. You ought not to think of Sir Henry after my Lady Alicia forbid it; yet you think of no one else from morning till night, or else I am as far out of the truth, as I am from heaven. The saints have mercy on us poor sinners!"

"Alas!" sighed Adela, "how can I forget him?"

"Forget him, no, you'll never forget him. You'll never have such another to think upon; sweet young gentleman! And how grand he looks in his armour, though it's enough to frighten one to see how terrible he seems when he has it all on. But as I was a saying, to think of being sent to that dismal old convent in St. Michael's Mount! It is the most dreadful place, they say, in all the world."

"Who told you it was so dreadful?" inquired the Lady Adela.

"Why, my lady, don't I know about St. Michael's Mount, when I used to see fifty pilgrims, or more, on their return from it, more especially after their great day, the Eve of St. John? When they came back from their journey, they would often stop and talk with father at our mill, in their way to the monastery."

"And did the pilgrims say that they knew anything about the lady who is the abbess of the convent of nuns in that Mount?" asked Adela.

"Ay, my lady! that they did," replied Grace; "they said she was just such another as our Lord Abbot. Baldwin himself in petticoats and veil! and she is his sister; and he made

her abbess of the house. And there is a convent of monks that joins that of the nuns at St. Michael's. It's the only good thing in the place; for it must be so dismal for women to see nothing but women. Don't you think so, my lady?"

"Alas, no!" answered Adela; "if I must be a prisoner, I had rather never see the face of man more."

"Ay, that's because you are in love, my lady," continued the loquacious Grace, who, as some excuse for her prattling, really fancied she did her young mistress good by it, as she would say, to hinder her from thinking.

"For you, my lady, there is only one man in all the world, and that is Sir Henry. Well, to be sure, he is worth fifty such as one sees every day. But I, who am not in love,—that is, not in love with any one in particular—and I could not abide Sir Simon, the curate,—I do like a little merriment and laughing with the other sex, when they are young enough to dance with me. Ah me! we shall have no dancing at the convent. It's cruel to treat us so. And then, they do say," she added in a lower voice, looking grave, and in a mysterious manner, "they do say, there are things to be seen there!"

"Many things, I have no doubt," replied Adela, "that will be strange and new to us, and not a little fearful."

"Fearful!" exclaimed Grace; "I think so; for what, my lady, can be more fearful than a white woman? and they say the Mount has been haunted by one for many a long year; and that she sits in St. Michael's chair at the top of the old tower, and that all the sea gulls come flapping their wings and screaming about her, as she calls to the winds, and throws locks of her hair into the sea; and raises the tempest, that wrecks the ships, and roars like so many lions in a forest. Oh! the pilgrims do tell such things of St. Michael's Mount; and worse than all these, in one way."

"How worse?" said the Lady Adela.

"Oh! they say there's a dungeon in the convent, always kept walled up, and that it is never broken open, except it be to take down to it some refractory novice who will not take the veil, or somebody who has done wrong; and there they leave the condemned person all alone in the dungeon to die, by walling her up alive. And they do say the ghosts of the sisters who have so perished come and scratch upon the wall, every night at twelve o'clock in the morning, and nothing quiets them but the ringing of a passing bell, to bid God rest their souls."

"Your accounts of the Mount are fearful indeed, Grace;

but I hope the pilgrims may speak more from report than from their own knowledge. I should, seriously speaking, fear hard treatment and the dungeon much more than the supernatural visitants of the place; though Holy Mary forbid, I should doubt that evil spirits are punished by being suffered, as a part of their punishment, to wander again on earth. I know it is my duty to believe this, and I do so. But the neighbourhood of the Mount is really evil, for Market Jew* is just opposite; is it not?—and if all we hear of the wickedness of the Jews, that obdurate people, be sooth, it is enough to bring all kinds of evil spirits to resort near their dwellings.”

Thus spoke the gentle Adela, who, good as she was, was neither more wise nor less credulous than the generality of persons in her day, and who therefore considered the unhappy Jews as devils incarnate; that they were great necromancers, and that among other proofs of their wickedness, was the permission given to foul spirits to gather in numbers round the towns where they dwelt.

In this particular, however, Grace Bolt shewed more acuteness than her mistress; for she remarked, she wondered then why the foul spirits did not keep on their own side, and haunt only Market Jew, without troubling themselves to cross the water to visit St. Michael's Mount, where there were two Christian convents, the one of nuns, and the other of monks, always praying against them.

“But, for my own part,” continued Grace, “I can't think how we shall get through the days, months, and years there, where we shall have none of our folk coming and going; no minstrels, no games, no green woods to wander in, and no Patch, the fool, to amuse us; with nothing but the same sights every day, the same broad piece of sea; with no birds to listen to but the gulls: the clapper of my poor old father's mill, that went from morning to night, was better than that. And then such a weary set of people as are the nuns; and such an abbess! I shall break my heart, before the year's out, if I go there.”

“Then you shall not go there, Grace,” said Adela; “no one shall follow me who goes with a reluctant will. Leave me, girl; I can find a companion and attendants enough in my own sad thoughts; I can dispense with you.”

The tears rose in the eyes of the Lady Adela, as the picture of her own desolation, among strangers, came before her mind.

* Market Jew, the ancient name for Merazion in Cornwall; in the twelfth century it was filled with Jews.

Perhaps, she felt a little angry at the moment that Grace, to whom she had shewn so much kindness, should regret so deeply the amusements of the castle, to place them in competition with her love towards so gentle and so condescending a mistress as she had been to her. For between the young, when brought into close contact by a prospect of suffering, in which both are likely to share, however great may be the distance of rank, a feeling of familiarity will creep in; so that whilst love is increased, awe is lessened, and the obedience of an inferior becomes changed into a service more like that of friendship than of humble duty. Even so was it at this moment with Grace Bolt and her young lady; for no sooner did she hear her mistress propose, in a manner that was marked by a little petulant feeling, that she should leave her to her sorrows in the Mount, than the tears rushed into Grace's eyes, and with the privilege of the young with the young, when alone guided by a generous impulse, she threw her arms round the Lady Adela's neck, and vowed she would never leave her, go where she would, as long as she had life to follow.

There was a pause of a few minutes, whilst each gave way to the fulness of her heart, with tears. Grace was the first to break this silence, because her ideas were more cheerful than those of her young mistress, and she fancied, also, she had really something to say that would be of service to her.

"Now, my dear lady," she began; "now do not think that what I am going to say is on my own account; for, indeed, I can quit the castle and all the world besides to follow you; for as to Patch the fool, though he is very civil to me, and I won't say but I have had thoughts there was something in his not dancing with Ethelinda, when he knew I did not like her, yet there is nothing serious yet about him; and there are fifty bachelors, as good as Patch, to be had any day, I will warrant me: so it is not for the sake of staying for his sake that I'm about to say what I am going to say; but, in truth, my dear young lady, only for your own sweet sake, and not liking to see true love crossed, which my heart never could abide, when there was a way to help it."

Anxious to come at the matter, Adela begged Grace to tell her to what all this tended, as her affection and fidelity were points she had never doubted. But she could not see what plan could be of any avail, in opposition to her aunt's determination to send her to the convent at St. Michael's Mount.

"Why thus it is, my lady," said the Abigail, who, though she lived in the twelfth century, was no less ready witted than

some of the nineteenth, in matters that require a little dexterity and management for their mistresses. "I have a plan, as you shall hear; but first let me say, that I do think all this coil about the true loves of Sir Henry de Pomeroy and yourself, without giving any one reason for it, as I can make out, proceeds from nothing but the Lady Alicia being in love with him herself."

"I cannot think it, Grace," said the Lady Adela. "You know how melancholy, how strict are the habits of my aunt, how severe her notions of what is due to her self-esteem; and that Sir Henry de Pomeroy is young enough to be her son. She would never, for a moment, entertain a thought of such a folly."

"The more the folly, the greater the love," (for, like all the maids of young ladies, Grace Bolt had some knowledge of matters appertaining to the court of love), "I tell you, my dear young lady; for I have seen it, even when I lived at the mill, among our townfolk and neighbours. I tell you, let a woman once be well in love, and she will see no reasons against it, but all for it. If my Lady Alicia's way of life is severe, she will think she ought to have something to soften it, and she will find that in loving Sir Henry. If melancholy, she will say she ought to have a cause for that, too, and will find it in her love for Sir Henry. If her esteem for herself be the question, she will think the better of herself, for loving so proper a man. And if she recollect that he is young and she old, she will say, love sees with its own eyes; and, therefore, shall Sir Henry's youth become a good match for her years; and fancy, she will say, never asks about the year of anybody's birth, but its own. Trust me, my lady loves him, and therefore does she so easily part from you. Now, if you will but follow my counsel, this journey to the convent of St. Michael shall never be."

"Speak it," said Adela; "for I am so unhappy, I would adopt any counsel. Like a drowning wretch, I would catch at straws and rushes to save me."

"Lady, you can write," replied Grace, eagerly: "catch at nothing but a grey goosequill; indite me here a letter to Sir Henry; tell him how you are to be spirited away; tell him the day and hour that you are to journey towards St. Michael's Mount. Do this, and trust to him to deliver you from such a cruel enforcement of your will to become a nun."

"And if I do write, I have no means to convey the letter. We are forbidden to pass the castle gates; we are both watched;

and you are suspected on my account. I have not a creature I could trust in such a delicate matter, save yourself, and you cannot help me. And more than all, I know not where Sir Henry may be found at this time; it is long since I have seen him."

"But I know where he is to be found," replied Grace; "and that there is no time to be lost. Cædmon, the Saxon page, came here to-day, with a letter from my Lord Abbot to the Lady Alicia; I saw him for a moment crossing the hall; I always pick out the news from the pages, and from him I learnt that Sir Henry de Pomeroy had this day arrived at the abbey to confer with my Lord Abbot, and that he is to leave it to-night, for some distant part of the county. Cædmon departed, or I would have learnt more; for he is a good youth, and I am sure might be trusted, for the sake of a fair lady's thanks and a kind word. I am sure he might be trusted to deliver a letter, in secret, to Sir Henry de Pomeroy."

"I think he might," said Adela; "but how to get it conveyed to Cædmon, who, you say, is gone back to the abbey?"

"Oh! leave that to me," said Grace; "I can wile our Patch to do a wise man's errand as well as any fool in the west; he would do anything for me for a fair word, or a smile, or, may be, a kiss. I don't say I ever let him take such freedoms, but I would promise to let him have one if he took safe the letter."

"And I would give him gold to do it," said the Lady Adela.

"Gold! my lady," exclaimed Grace; "do you think Patch would want such to make him do your ladyship's bidding when I had said he should have what he would think so much better a reward? But it was only for your sake I thought of it. I want no bachelors to be familiar with me," added Grace, in a tone which seemed to indicate she thought her offer of service for her lady's sake had been somewhat underrated, in the high price her vanity prompted her to set on the promised reward.

The Lady Adela could not suppress a smile in the midst of her distress, and said—"Well, my girl, and if Patch steals a kiss from you, as a reward for serving me in this strait, you shall be no loser; for I will give you a dozen, Grace, myself, to requite the one stolen, as my best thanks for your suggestion. Anything is better than being forced into a convent. I will write to Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and will tell him how I am situated; and you shall lose no time in instructing Patch what to do with my letter."

It was soon written, sealed, tied with a silken string, and deposited in the fair and faithful bosom of Grace Bolt, and away she went to seek the Fool as her messenger.

On her way, at the landing of the great staircase, she met Nurse Cicely.

"Good-morrow, my pretty maiden. Whither away so fast?" said the Nurse. "You look heated," and she gave her an obliging waft of a breeze from her constant hand-friend, the great peacock-feathered fan.

"Only to do an errand for my young lady," said Grace.

"An errand for thy young lady! and what may that be?" said the Nurse.

"Nothing of any consequence," replied Grace.

"Then the more easily told, my bower-maiden," said Cicely.

"Well, but suppose I don't choose to tell!" said Grace pertly, who was irritated into making a hasty speech by this interruption.

"Oh, marry! do we get pert to our betters?" said the Nurse, reddening, and fanning herself with a length of fan, like the first wind of a rising tempest. "There are those in the castle who can make you tell, mistress, did I choose to set them about your ears. But I will know; for did not I tell you, when I engaged you to wait upon my young lady, that I was to know all her secrets that you chanced to know?"

"But I did not say this was a secret," said Grace; "do let me pass, for I am in haste."

"Pass over my head, then, as you seem well disposed to do," said the Nurse, planting herself in such a manner in the very middle of the landing-place at the top of the stairs, that, stout as she was, Grace could not slip by her. "Now nurse, good nurse," she said; "do let me pass."

"Oh, yes, forsooth, we are good nurse now that we want to slip away from being found out; but old nurse at another time, when there is nothing to be got but thank you, for good manners. But I tell you, slut, that you shall not pass till I know the business you are going upon. Don't I and all the castle know that it is my Lady Alicia de Beaumont's pleasure that an eye should be kept over you and your young lady, who does not know her duty, to see you go no wrong ways."

"Well then," said Grace, "I am only going to seek Patch, the fool."

"Seek Patch, the fool!" exclaimed Cicely; "fool enough, indeed, if he gives his mind or his company to such as you."

"But in order that he may give his mind, and his company also, to something much better, I would now seek him, to tell him that my young lady would fain give him some instructions that may be useful to him before she leaves Wilsworthy. And as my lady and I are going where we shall not want such things, now I think of it, I will ask my lady, before we leave, to give you the furred court-pie, that you said you should like to have when she left it off; and as to Patch, I'll tell him that my young lady will never give him a cross or a tester more, nor send him one, if he does not pay as much attention to you, and go with you to mass, and serve you at your trencher, when we are gone, as if you were herself."

"There's some sense in that, if you speak sooth," said Cicely.

"And why should I not?" said Grace; "what good can it do me when I am gone, if Patch care for you or not, Nurse Cicely, that I should trouble myself about the matter, but to please my lady, who respects you? and as to the court-pie, I will not say a word about it to my lady, if you would wish me not."

"By all means, speak about it," said the Nurse; "I could take out the furs, and line my kirtle with them against winter."

"Well then," replied Grace, "it shall be yours, and so let me pass on." And on she went, rejoicing to think how she had escaped the Argus eyes of Nurse Cicely at the cost of as little story-telling as bower-maiden could hope to expend to clear herself from such a strait. And now came the part to be played with Patch, and here Grace displayed all her tact and skill.

First of all, when she saw him standing and playing with one of his favourite hawks that he had taken down from its perch in the great hall, she at once determined to change her previously arranged mode of attack, and, as she had not now to seek him, she would seem to be where she was by chance, that he might seek her. So she made as if she would pass on; but in order that his ears might convey to him a sense of her presence (for his back being towards her, his eyes could not), she sang a verse or two of one of the most popular ballads of Robin Hood.

Patch, who was musical, took her up at the counterpoint, and chimed in with the tune.

"A dainty ballad that, Master Patch," said Grace, as she ended the verse.

"And one that lures the very hawks from their perches when you sing it, my pretty one," said the Fool tenderly, as he stooped down and extended his hand to his favourite, who had flown from the perch to the ground.

"I wish that hawk were a carrier-bird, such as our crusaders use, to send any news by, to the Christian prisoners in a Saracen fortress, as we are told they do sometimes, in the ballads of the minstrels."

"And wherefore do you wish this, my pretty one?" inquired Patch.

"Because,—because," answered Grace, coquetishly, and giving him a smile that made her look very pretty indeed, "because,—I won't tell you."

"Yes, you will,—you must tell me, Grace; me, who would be to you as your carrier-bird, or as the very dove of your bosom, would you but let me, Grace; you do not know how tender I am and can be,—do try me?"

"Well, I do not know but I may," she replied, "would you then put wings to your feet, instead of your back, and fly like a swallow for swiftness, and bear a letter for me to Cædmon, the Saxon page, and do so in secret. Patch, can you keep a secret?"

"Ay, that I can, when it comes from a pretty wench, like thyself, provided it is sealed;" and the Fool looked at Grace Bolt's lips as he spoke, as if they had been made of red wax, and fitted for melting at the warmth of that flame he was in the very mood to light up in his own heart for her. He gave also certain other indications of preparing to take that reward she had already intimated to her mistress she might feel disposed to reserve as a payment for his services; for he wiped his mouth on his sleeve, and looked at her again as lovingly as if she were one of his young and favourite hawks.

But Grace knew well that to pay beforehand is not always wise; and so she drew up her head, and said rather sharply, "Stand back, Master Patch; you don't play the fool with me; I shall not seal, as you call it, till the letter brings an answer of receipt. No kissing for services to come."

"Then I will do none," said Patch pettishly.

"At your pleasure," replied Grace. "Osgood, the forester, will do my errand as well for me, and ask no present guerdon; though perhaps I may give him leave to take one, because he is too modest to ask it. I shall go to him."

"That's what you shall not," said Patch, his jealousy of the forester's gaining any claims for service done to Grace

Bolt overcoming all his scruples. "Give me your letter, and I will bear it for you, though it were to the devil's house?"

"For shame," said Grace; "it is only to the monastery, where they know so well how to keep him out. But Patch, if you do my errand, you must remember you do it for one greater than I, even for my young lady. And there must be no blundering of your thick head."

"I would cut it off to prevent mistakes, rather than make a dull use of it in your service, my sweetest of millers' daughters," said the Fool; "only instruct me, and I will obey you."

"Well, then," said Grace, "seek Cædmon, the Saxon page, and tell him, as he loves the saints in heaven, or would win the thanks and prayers of a fair and distressed lady on earth—the Lady Adela—that he give that letter, in secret, to Sir Henry de Pomeroy. Now mind, in secret; and don't talk of your errand to any one."

"I will do all you direct," said Patch, "and do it quickly."

"And be sure and call at the mill," continued Grace, "and give my duty to father, and tell him that I am going away somewhere with my young lady, but I am told not to mention it to anybody; so I only tell it to you, that you may tell it to him: it is to Mount St. Michael's, among the nuns in that gloomy place. And be sure and ask father how the new ass carries the sacks of corn, and if he is as good at a load as the old one. And ask how Orgar does, and the little dog too; and give my love to them all."

Patch promised the fair Molinaria to obey all these her several behests, and set off accordingly to fulfil them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Bloated with ambition. pride and avarice,
You swell to counsel kings and govern kingdoms.
Content you with monopolizing heaven,
And let this little hanging ball alone;
For give you but a foot of conscience there,¹
And you, like Archimedes, toss the globe.

DRYDEN.

ABBOT BALDWIN was by no means one of those churchmen who, having obtained the rule over an opulent house, are satisfied with what they possess, and, availing themselves of its revenues to meet their own lavish expenditure, are content to let the rest go in its regular channel for the support of the monastery and the poor.

Little as Baldwin cared for money in itself, he knew well enough it was the very lifeblood of his ambitious views; and that without its aid he could not hope to set in motion any of those mercenary partisans with whom he was leagued to carry forward all his plans. The acquisition of wealth was to him, therefore, as an instrument of aggrandisement, one by which he could raise his own fortunes to higher honours, and a larger scope for the exercise of that power he had hitherto enjoyed. With a view to the furtherance of this object, he had originally urged on the marriage between his friend and ally Sir Henry de Pomeroy and the fair Adela. But he had not then believed it to be within the verge of possibility that an opportunity would occur (by the concurrence of the Lady Alicia, and the instrumentality of his own sister, the abbess of St. Michael's), enabling him, by having the unfortunate young creature within his power, to convert to his own and the church's use the whole of her immense possessions. This advantage he had seen at a glance, when the Lady Alicia made her confession; hence was it he had at once espoused all her views, to

break the projected match between Adela and his friend, and place her in a convent for life.

But whilst thus actively employed in a scheme so selfish in its ends, Baldwin did not forget that it was absolutely necessary Sir Henry de Pomeroy should be kept in total ignorance of the part he took in all these dark designs. For Sir Henry was a person of too much importance to be lost to the cause of the Earl of Mortaigne (by whose favour Baldwin hoped to rise to the very summit of his ambition, were but the prince once seated on the throne), by any offence that might be given him on the part of the abbot or his friends. All that was to be done, therefore, in the removal of the Lady Adela, must be so carried forward as to seem the sole unassisted work of the Lady Alicia. And, in order the better to secure her measures from all interruption, the wily abbot had undertaken to send Sir Henry, on some matter connected with their plots, to the castle of one of the rebel barons, in the north of the county, till Adela should be removed.

But there are moments when the human will, even in the least capricious, cannot be held within its customary line of action; so was it now with Sir Henry. For the first time, since these intrigues were set on foot by Prince John, he did not obey the advice or instructions of the abbot; so that, instead of going direct to the north of Devon, he came to the abbey, there to complain to his supposed friend of the rigour with which he had been treated by the Lady Alicia, who had refused him all admission at the castle, since she had been openly acquainted with his pretensions to her ward.

Another cause likewise induced Sir Henry to seek Baldwin: he had lately felt, he could scarcely tell wherefore, a lurking and undefined suspicion of the abbot's sincerity towards him; so true is it that real confidence never does exist between crafty men. With the abbot, even in his most sincere days, we doubt if Sir Henry, had he been put to a similar test, would have played the part of Alexander and his physician.

Yet nothing particular had occurred to shake his confidence in Baldwin. The truth was that, almost unknown to himself, the hints which had been thrown out by the palmer concerning the abbot, had slowly but surely made an impression on Sir Henry's mind; they had caused him to reflect seriously respecting the past. The abbot's intrigues for the Earl of Mortaigne, with all their treachery, thus came before him in a new light; and Baldwin did not rise in his estimation by this calm but severe retrospection. Sir Henry knew also, that

the abbot was a disappointed man; that his hatred to Richard arose from his having failed in his views of gaining the primacy of England. *That* for years had been the aim of his ambition; for *that* had he plotted, served, toiled, betrayed; and like many an ambitious character, Baldwin had converted his hopes into expectations, and finally had mistaken his own views for himself, for such as other men in power ought to entertain for him. Hence was it that the bitterness of Baldwin's former disappointments arose more from the deceptions of his own pride and self-conceit than from any other cause.

Richard had given him much; but from the hour the primacy was denied to his hopes, the abbot, as is usual with ungrateful persons, cancelled the memory of all past obligations, and considered the king as ungrateful to him; cherishing in his own bosom the feelings of an injured churchman, because he was a dissatisfied man. This dissatisfaction shewed itself in every thing; hence had originated those bitter quarrels with the bishop of the diocese, and those appeals to Rome, of which we had occasion to speak formerly: quarrels still unsettled, still rankling and irritating, that served, with the growing spirit of rebellion, to add to the sufferings and the difficulties of many well-disposed persons in the West, who in their secret souls longed indeed for peace. Painful as was the retrospection of all these matters, they were rendered yet more galling, when Sir Henry recollected that there was something strange in the abbot's not having said a word about the Lady Adela for some days past; nor had Baldwin even named her in the letter in which he had proposed to him the journey to the north. These recollections now so acted on the young Lord de Pomeroy, that he was by no means in the most friendly or satisfied mood when he once more met Baldwin at his own abbey. There was, therefore, something of distance and reserve in the manner of Sir Henry as he saluted the superior with a cold and formal good-morrow.

This cold manner struck the abbot; it embarrassed him, conscious as he was of the double part he had been playing with his friend; and this very consciousness occasioned his own manner to become as distant and reserved as Sir Henry's. They were to dine in private: on former occasions, a meal of this nature was always favourable to the most social intercourse; but now they sat down to their private repast in the abbot's chamber with the most awkward feelings; for each felt as if he had a quarrel with the other, and this feeling soon induced a querulous temper in both. At length they differed

on some trifling matter; and when persons do so, whilst under the influence of the captious mood, it seldom fails to end in a real, open, and serious breach. Even so was it now. For not only did they disagree concerning certain steps to be taken in the affairs of the Earl of Mortaigne; but on Sir Henry's entering upon the circumstances of his severe repulse from the Lady Alicia, and the abbot giving no advice, no counsel about his suit, and no offers of service with the guardian of his beloved Adela (though Baldwin had originally proposed her to him), the fiery lover lost his temper, and in no very measured terms fell upon the abbot with the bitterest reproaches, the effects of spleen, more than of any settled purpose of displeasure.

Proud, haughty, unused to reproof, and ill brooking it from one he deemed his inferior in talents, as in age, Baldwin felt his blood rise; it glowed in his cheeks, it darkened his brow, it trembled in his whole disturbed frame. He felt he was on the point of bursting upon the petulant boy (for so he deemed Sir Henry, at this moment) with such a passionate reply as in all probability would for ever cause a breach between them; a breach which might, perhaps, be fatal to the interests of the Earl of Mortaigne.

Under so strong a temptation to give vent to his fury, the abbot had but one way left to preserve his self-command, and that he adopted ere it was too late. On some slight pretext of recollecting he had a matter of business about the abbey that he had forgotten to arrange with the claustral prior before he sat down to dinner, he had resolution enough to make a hasty retreat, to endeavour, by absenting himself for a short time from the object of his wrath, to overcome its violence. But such an effort at self-command, such a repression of his own feelings, was gall and bitterness to the proud spirit of Abbot Baldwin, who had never curbed his own will to pleasure mortal creature. He was, therefore, not only angry with Sir Henry, but with himself, for thus seemingly having yielded to him.

In this temper of mind, as ill fortune would have it, the first person he met on leaving the dining chamber was Cædmon the page. The dark spot on the abbot's brow was too evident to escape the notice of the youth, who looked his thoughts, as he stopped short and bowed in silence to his superior. Had the page been wise, he should not have looked at Baldwin in a way as if he were struck with the disturbance of his countenance; he should have passed on, without seeming to heed it. As it was, the keen glance of the Saxon's eye (trifling though

such a circumstance may be) was sufficient to give a new cause of offence to a proud and irritated mind, which, like an animal of prey, when once roused into fury, will fall on any one who may chance to cross its path, though the object which had originally called up its rage has escaped him.

Even so was it now: the mind of Baldwin (ill governed in all matters where its own schemes were not immediately and vitally concerned) felt some kind of relief in having an object thrown in its way on which it could with impunity vent the overflowing bitterness of its own feelings. On seeing Cædmon, therefore, advance to the door of the gallery which led into the chamber wherein he had left Sir Henry, the abbot asked in a rough, rude, and sudden manner—"What might be Cædmon's business, that, without asking permission, he was about to seek his guest, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, in his (the abbot's) private chamber?"

"My Lord Abbot," answered Cædmon, "I have a letter to deliver into Sir Henry's own hands."

"A letter! from whom?"

"I am not at liberty to say, my lord," replied Cædmon, mildly but firmly.

"Not at liberty to say!" reechoed the Abbot: "Ha! that's strange. But you are my page, and I command you, on your obedience to me, to give up the letter to my hands. I will deliver it."

"I dare not do so," replied Cædmon.

"Dare not!" exclaimed the Abbot, again, in the very surprise of the circumstance, repeating the page's words. "How dare not?"

"Because," replied Cædmon, "my own honour would not suffer me to do so. I have promised to deliver it into no hand but that of Sir Henry."

"Then I will save thy nice honour, insolent boy," said the Abbot; and he attempted to thrust his hand into the breast of Cædmon's tunic, for he evidently saw it was there that he carried the letter by his placing his hand upon it.

The boy struggled. "No, my Lord Abbot, no," he said vehemently, "this must not be; I would rather die on the spot, than betray a trust. My duty to you, my lord, is much, but to preserve my honour is to myself more. I will not yield the letter up to you."

"This from a base-born slave!" cried the Abbot, passionately; "one of your vile race pretend to talk of your honour in slavery!"

"The Norman abbot has forgot what belongs to his own honour, in the greatness of his power," said Cædmon; "but the Saxon boy will remember what is due to his, even in the misery of the most abject dependence. Proud Abbot! I am neither base-born, nor a slave; but the son of a brave Saxon thane, nobler born than thyself."

Irritated to the quick by this disrespectful and indignant speech, from the lips of a poor Saxon youth, who was his own and (in other moods) his favoured page, Baldwin (who had good cause for a reasonable anger) unhappily so far forgot his manhood, and the respect due to himself as a churchman, that in the vehemence of his passion, he struck Cædmon a blow! The youth recoiled some steps on receiving it; but not from its violence. He recoiled from the shock sustained by the injury done to his inward, not his outward feelings by such an indignity. The blow struck most on the spirit, not on the body of the Saxon.

His whole countenance became in an instant changed; all that there was of the gentleness, the sweetness which usually characterised it, fled; and though the features remained the same, yet it seemed as if one of those enraged spirits that were the theme of Saxon story, had suddenly animated them with the very instinct of evil. His cheek was blanched, his lips closed, his teeth set together; he drew hard his breath, though not a word escaped him—such deep passions had no utterance; and there was a sternness in his vulture eye, as he placed his hand upon his side, as if to draw his poniard, for a purpose that should give a blow which would requite on the spot the indelible dishonour of that he had received.

Fortunately, however, he had left his poniard where it chanced to be lying, on the table of the scriptorium, at the moment when Patch committed to his trust the letter, he was about to deliver, with all due caution. This circumstance, in all probability, saved the life of the Lord Abbot; but it could not his own. Cædmon knew it. He knew well, the instant he could but think of what had passed, that his passionate words, his still more passionate action, towards the superior of an abbey that had the privilege of pit and gallows, and in such arbitrary times, must be fatal to him. He knew he should be sentenced to die by a means the most degrading: the thought was not to be endured. Deprived of the instrument of an immediate resentment, stung to the very soul, by a sense of his disgrace, and almost maddened with the vehemence of his insulted feelings, he exclaimed, as the abbot endeavoured to detain him—

“Let me go, my Lord Abbot, let me go;—you have struck me, you have dishonoured me for ever! My fathers never brooked a blow! You have ruined the Saxon boy who loved you; whose heart beat warmly in gratitude to you. But you have lowered him in his own eyes, in his own esteem. You have left him nothing to hope for but in death.”

So saying, with a wildness in his looks amounting almost to frenzy, he rushed past Baldwin, and before any interruption could be given to his purpose, quitted the abbey, and, like the hunted hart that carries in his side the arrow that has stricken but not slain him, Cædmon fled with a swift step and a tortured mind, to seek Wulfred, the old Saxon crusader, the faithful follower of his grandsire Oswy, and the last remaining friend to whom he could unburthen his heart, or who was capable of estimating the extent of his injuries, and the strength of his indignant emotion.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Death could not a more sad retinue find,
Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.

NORRIS.

WHEN Cædmon rushed from the presence of Abbot Baldwin, he felt as if all the world had risen against him, because the world within himself had rebelled, and his sense of indignation had passed the bounds of reason. He had loved Baldwin, and Baldwin had disappointed his feelings. The first disappointments of youth, be they in friendship or in love, are ever the bitterest; as at that period of life the mind has not acquired experience sufficient to make it, in some measure, expect disappointment, whilst it teaches it to bear with submission those evils that are inevitable, and to look with a patient hope on all such as are capable of alleviation from time, circumstance, or change.

Though Baldwin was his superior in age, learning, and station, yet Cædmon had lived with him so much on terms of equality, so favoured, so familiarly happy, that he felt a rupture with the abbot was nothing less than the breaking of an ancient friendship; a thing always painful, and doubly so now, as to the usual sufferings of such a breach were super-added, on his part, the fear of punishment, and all the danger of a resentment that would feel itself bound in dignity, as well as in policy, not to forgive. Cædmon, also, was very wrath; his character, one of uncommon energy, caused his emotions, of hatred or of love, to be alike sensitive and strong. Even in calmer hours, when his feelings seemed to slumber, as if he were indifferent to things around him, there ever lurked below this unruffled surface an under current that ran deep and strong, though it seldom appeared in all its force, till acted upon from without by the winds and tempests of his adverse fortunes.

Yet, notwithstanding this strength of angry passion, the natural generosity of Cædmon's disposition caused him very readily to forgive. He was easily reconciled, even to those who had most deeply injured him, on the slightest appearance of remorse, or on the first movement towards conciliation. He asked no more; for what generous mind but would spare to another all the pain that can be spared in the avowal of having done wrong? Angry as he was, yet could Cædmon have hoped for a reconciliation, even now would he have turned back, and sought it, after the first burst of feeling, not at the abbot's feet, but on his neck, with tears of affection; for he still entertained for him affection; he felt indeed that dissatisfaction within himself which is so apt to arise in an ingenuous mind from the consciousness of being at war with one beloved.

But, alas! Cædmon knew Baldwin too well to hope for a reconciliation after what had passed. He knew, though the abbot had so highly favoured and esteemed him, he was not a man who could love; for he had far more imagination than sensibility in his character; and all the superior's preferences and friendships had ever more to do with his temper or his interest than with his heart. Thoughts such as these crowded on the young Saxon's mind, and so possessed him, that he seemed scarcely conscious of the path over which he trod in his way to old Wulfred's poor and lowly dwelling.

He had to cross in his track a small but thick wood; he now drew near its confines. It was evening; the sun was sinking amidst clouds of a threatening aspect, dull, heavy, and dark, as if laden with a gathering storm. The "melancholy boughs" which overhung his path, waved gently in the rising breeze, and gave forth sounds that to his disquieted mind seemed like the low and monotonous murmurs of a suppressed grief. Cædmon passed under their profound shade with feelings in harmony with the hour and the scene. He was exactly in that state of mind which is raised by its own expectations to receive every accidental circumstance with a painful impression, a foreboding of evil.

At the outskirts of the little wood, and not far from the path that led directly to the cottage, ran a small stream, over whose banks hung the pendent boughs of a few willows. Alone, and apart from these, the younger possessors of the soil, and as if shunned by them in its age and its misery, arose the decaying trunk, with a few remaining branches, of a withered and blasted oak; an oak which, in the last stage of

its decay, had been struck with lightning: the honours of its "antiquity" not spared, even as in human life we sometimes see the grey and venerable head laid low by some sudden stroke of adversity, after it had long and bravely withstood the manifold assaults of an envious world. On one of the few and withered boughs of the old oak, there now sat a raven, that croaked its dismal note as Cædmon passed the spot: a more fearful omen to a true born Saxon, filled with all the superstitious terrors of his age, could not be found. Cædmon looked up and shuddered: "It is the death-bird's cry," he muttered to himself, and with an impatience so common to passionate tempers, when worked to their utmost pitch, he resented even on the poor bird, the bitterness of his own feelings, as he stooped, and gathering up some loose stones that lay in the path, threw them at the raven. But the melancholy harbinger of evil, untouched, and undismayed by the vain assault that had been made upon her, kept her seat on the withered bough, and only answered the attempt by a reiterated cry.

Cædmon cursed the omen and passed on. In a less excited state, he would have made the sign of the cross for protection; but his anger was now too fierce for any approach to such religious practices, as he deemed sacred. He felt this; and the conviction how greatly internal peace is essential to that religious profession which Abbot Baldwin had so often recommended to his choice, flashed upon him, and he thought how incapable was a character passionate as his own, of becoming worthy the divine honours of the priesthood.

As Cædmon drew near the village church, of which we spoke in an earlier part of this narrative, he involuntarily turned his eye to the cross; at whose base, when he had last visited the spot, he had seen old Wulfred, surrounded by the favourite playmates of extreme age—a company of little children. He had also often there seen him watching, with a "lack lustre eye," the last beams of the setting sun; which the old crusader seldom did without observing,—how soon that sun must set its last for him.

The cross remained just as it had stood ever since it had been raised by the piety of one of Cædmon's great Saxon ancestors, in the early stages of Christianity, who had also built the church that was at hand, on the site of an ancient baptistery. That cross now stood, in the silence of evening, illumined by the bright yellow beams of the departing sun; but Wulfred was not there. Four or five children, who looked

hard at Cædmon as he passed along, were standing or sitting round its base, but not engaged in their usual play; they seemed to want the friendly and accustomed leader of their sports, the old crusader, who, in his decay, had amused them in his idle hours, and kept up the last shew of authority, to which extreme age so tenaciously clings, in the right to exercise it over children.

Cædmon did not speak to these little ones, as he passed, for he was in no mood for gentle words and thoughts, and with such he had always hitherto approached infancy. He soon cleared the remainder of his way, and stood before the door of Wulfred's dwelling. The door was on the latch; it had no fastenings within, for Wulfred, notwithstanding the surrounding country was infested with thieves and marauders, had no fear, and possessed so little of this world's goods, and was so careless about them, that he had long enjoyed his days and nights in security and peace, which some of his neighbours, better off than himself, could never do; more especially when the Norman barons, and their reckless bands, rode abroad.

All without the cottage was still, and Cædmon fancied more than usually neglected; for a wooden seat, on which the old man often reposed at his door, was overturned; and two or three domestic fowls, that Wulfred was accustomed to keep within certain bounds, were now ranging unconfined, and had scratched holes and pits among the few flowers, and in the only bed of potherbs, the little garden could boast.

These indications of something different from the usual course of things did not escape Cædmon; and it was not without a secret misgiving he raised the latch, and, as if fearful of disturbing those who might be within, entered softly the low-roofed cabin of one so poor and so depressed. The very first glance told Cædmon all the truth—Wulfred was on the bed of death.

There, on a heap of straw and dried fern, wrapped in his woollen cloak, his lower limbs covered with a blanket, lay the faithful follower of the once gallant Oswy, the father of Cædmon's father, the fallen thane. Wulfred's head was supported by a heap of straw, on which was a pillow, his only luxury, and one that had been a gift of charity to his sick bed. Scarcely anything worthy the name of furniture was in the room: a stool or two, a rough-hewn table, a few domestic utensils of the rudest kind, and a crucifix, constituted all his wealth; except that on the walls hung the arms and armour of this

faithful soldier of the cross. These warlike habiliments still looked tolerably well, for they had been carefully kept; and to scour and furbish arms, which he had no strength to wield, had been one of the chief employments of Wulfred in his old age, when he was not engaged in telling his beads, feeding his poultry, or playing with the children.

Two faithful creatures were all that now attended the last hours of poor Wulfred. But those were each of a kind the last to desert man in the moments of his extremity, or his distress; for a woman and a dog watched by his bed of death.

Look at the career of man as he passes through the world,—of man visited by misfortune! How often is he left by his fellow-man to sink under the weight of his afflictions, unheeded and alone! One friend, of his own sex, forgets him; another neglects him; a third, may be, betrays him. But woman, faithful woman, follows him in his misery with unshaken affection; bears the changes of his feelings, of his temper (embittered by the disappointments of the world), with the highest of all the passive virtues, a resigned patience; ministers to his wants, even when her own are hard and pressing; weeps with him in his distress, and is the first to catch and to reflect a ray of joy, should but one light up his languid countenance in the midst of his sufferings, and never leaves him to his misery whilst there remains an act of love, duty, or compassion, to be performed; and at the last, when life and sorrow cease together, follows him to the grave with that ardour of affection which death can alone destroy.

The female who now attended on the sick bed of Wulfred was one of his own kindred, a Saxon born, and though many years younger than himself, still far advanced in life. At the moment Cædmon entered, she was administering to him a cordial drink that had been prescribed for him by the official at the neighbouring castle, whose duty it was to give a charitable eye to the old and the sick of the Lady Alicia de Beaumont's far extending domain. If Wulfred had fewer conveniences and comforts about him than many others, it was his own fault, and arose in a great measure from his prejudices, and his often refusing the proffered kindness of the Norman lady, because he considered that she stood in the place which the Saxon-born Cædmon ought to occupy in the castle of his forefathers.

As Cædmon approached, the old man raised his head, but his eyes were dim with age, and he did not immediately recognise his beloved young master. The latter was struck mute

with sorrow and surprise at the sight which had so unexpectedly presented itself before him; for he had never heard of Wulfred's illness, and he did not therefore anticipate finding his only remaining follower stretched on the bed of death.

At such a sight Cædmon felt all the worth of that which he was about to lose, and for ever—a true friend. He felt how necessary to all men, but above all to the orphan and the unprotected, are the counsels of friendship. He recollected how often, before now, he had known sorrows and vexations which none but a sympathizing heart, like Wulfred's, could have shared. And what should he do when Wulfred was gone?—he, the outcast Saxon boy, could have little to hope from the ordinary benevolence, even of the good, in the general mass of his fellow-countrymen, who were sufferers like himself.

The scene on which Cædmon now entered to bear a part was indeed impressive: there lay, stretched on his couch of straw, the worn-out crusader; his countenance venerable, pallid, but still expressive even in death,—his eye dim, but raised, as if it sought from above that light which, on earth, was for him and for ever nearly shut out. The damps of pain and weakness were on his furrowed brow; but though in the last stage of life, he breathed tolerably free, and spoke stronger than he had done for some days past; at least so thought the Saxon Bertha. She said also that his mind sometimes wandered, yet only in reference to the past, which he would often fancy to be present with him. But when recalled to himself, and his attention became fixed on any point, he was at once clear, distinct, and self-possessed. It seemed to Cædmon as if, in shaking off mortality, Wulfred parted only with the memory of the latter years of his life, and the pains and infirmities that had been their portion; but that all his early recollections and feelings clung to his spirit, partook of its immortality, and became, as it were, to him a part of that futurity to which he now looked forward with a sense of awe not unmingled with fear.

Bertha, who had so kindly ministered to his wants, now, as she leaned over him, took from his pallid lips the scarcely tasted cordial. Her eyes met those of Cædmon as he drew nigh the bed; they were red with weeping; she gave the Saxon a speaking glance as she shook her head mournfully, and seemed to say to him—"You see how he is; you come too late."

The dog, the cherished companion of Wulfred's walks and

solitary hours, old like his master, and like him nearly worn out, sat at the feet of the couch; not crouching down, but upright, and watched wistfully his master's face, as if expecting him to rise. It seemed as if the instinct of the faithful animal had told him something was amiss; for when Cædmon entered, he did not come up to him, or court his notice, as he was wont to do in happier hours; but sat still, only turning his head towards the visiter, without moving from his place, and again resumed his watch. Cædmon asked, as soon as his surprise would let him speak, how long had he been thus? had he been cared for? and was there hope?

"Alas! no," replied Bertha; "for the dead-bird has croaked under his window, and the cricket has been heard; and yesterday a white horse came without a rider to his door. There is no hope for him on earth; but the Virgin and all the saints watch for our good Wulfred in heaven."

So spoke his kinswoman, quite unheeding of the effects her words might produce on the sick man, whose sense of hearing was much quicker than that of seeing at this moment; but old Bertha was a true Saxon in all that related to matters of superstition, and therefore believed that signs, and wonders, and death omens, and all other mysterious indications of the soul being about to leave its earthly tenement, were things as sacred and as true as the creed in which she placed her faith as a Christian.

"Alas!" said Cædmon, "and was it but to witness this, I have now sought him in the hour of my affliction! When I would fly from myself, from my own misery, it is but to meet a comforter in death!"

"That is the voice of Cædmon," said Wulfred, who caught the last words, as the Saxon stood near the bed. "He so young, and talk of death! It is only the old like me, who ought to talk of that; old, sick, and dying. Cædmon! where is he? Give me your hand."

"I am here, my dear Wulfred. I came to seek you, to counsel with you; but little did I think to find you thus. I am here; do you see me?—here is my hand."

"Yes, yes, I can see you now" (Cædmon had thrown himself down beside the bed of straw); "but my eyes are dim; and to me you look not as you used to do—all looks darker. But the darkness I know is in myself—in my poor old eyes; but it suits best with the place where I am going—to the grave."

"And must I lose you, Wulfred!" exclaimed Cædmon, in a tone of passionate sorrow: "must I lose you, my only friend!"

Would that I could give you my youth, and take your age, and lie me down in death instead of you; for of life I am, indeed, already weary."

"Alack! what is that?" said Wulfred; "already weary of life! Oh, say not so, dear Cædmon! those are sad words to come from so young a heart. None but the old should know sorrow, for none but such as are old know the world. What has chanced?"

"I must not tell you, Wulfred; you are in no condition to be disturbed by my injuries or my griefs. Had you been well, I would have counselled with you—but not now! think not of me, but of yourself. Is there aught I can do for you?"

"Pray for me, Cædmon, pray for me! for I am going where no man may serve me, unless it be with such gifts as God will alone accept in payment for his blessings, the gifts of prayer and praise."

"I do, Wulfred, I do pray for you. May the Virgin and all saints have mercy on you, and receive your soul, whenever it is called hence to its eternal rest. But I trust you may yet be spared. Your speech is too firm, your mind too collected, for dying."

"You are mistaken," replied Wulfred; "I know I shall not pass over this night; the sun that sets to-day, will set the last for me: I know it, Cædmon."

"How know it?" inquired Cædmon.

"No matter," said Wulfred.

"He has had a death vision," whispered Bertha in a low voice, as she looked mysteriously around her; "but I must not say what it was; he charged me not to tell it. Perhaps he will tell it you himself anon."

Cædmon would have replied, but Wulfred, who dearly loved the young thane, now addressed him with much warmth, and said: "You talked, Cædmon, of injuries and griefs; who has injured you? or did you speak but of those injuries which have come to you from the wrongs of your fathers, as a part of your birthright? for so the Normans have dealt with you and yours."

"Could you aid me, Wulfred, I would even now complain; but, alas! you cannot," answered Cædmon; "and so let my injuries rest where heaven can alone find them, and visit them for comfort, within my own heart. A Norman has, in truth, been ever fatal to our house."

"A Norman!" exclaimed Wulfred, "a Norman!" for the very sound of that word, coupled with a complaint of injus-

tice, called up in the mind of Wulfred a fearful train of recollection: "Ay, a Norman has in truth injured thee, rendered thee fatherless, homeless, beggared, little better than a slave." As he spoke the old man seemed greatly disturbed.

"Peace, Wulfred, peace," said Bertha; "think not of these matters; they will but shake out of thee the little life that remains; rather take comfort to thy heart, and think upon the cross."

She held up that which depended from the rosary at her side, as she spoke; but an allusion of this kind was not at all calculated to soothe the awaking recollections of Wulfred.

"Think upon the cross!" he exclaimed; "ay, I do think upon it—I see it—look, Cædmon, look! there he stands."

"Who, my dear Wulfred, to what do you allude?"

"Rest thee, rest thee," again said Bertha. "He cannot bear these starts now," she added, looking at Cædmon.

"I can bear my sword yet, and can carry my master's shield, as I did in the day of battle," said Wulfred. "Oh! that was a glorious day for strife: how strange it should now come back again! Oswy—the noble Oswy. Do you not see him? there—there: see how he grasps the cross! See how his armour shines—his sword glances in the sun. His looks, how calm they are, yet they are daring; they are not those of a man, for though terrible they are bright, and his eye has in it the glance of an eagle. A glory is round his head, as his white plume waves above his crest."

"His mind wanders to the days of war and youth," said Cædmon; "has he been thus before?"

"Yes, three or four times since his illness, when he has not slept much," said Bertha; "the fit comes and goes, it seldom lasts long; and the hermit of Wilsworthy, who came yesterday to see him, said it was a temptation of the evil spirit, who fears he may die in prayer and in peace."

"I fear not to die," said Wulfred; "I have seen Oswy down, and have stood over his dead body, till my own blood mingled with that which flowed from his wounds. I fear not death, but I know what I fear."

"You can have no reasonable grounds for fear, Wulfred," said Cædmon; "you have lived faithful, and have done your duty, as a soldier and a man; what should you have to fear? the Mother of heaven will protect you."

"Will she?" said Wulfred; "will she?" and his thoughts took a new turn in their wanderings, from hearing the word mother. "Blessed be the tongue that tells me so; I know

what a mother is, and what a mother's love can do for a dear son: I had a mother once."

"Yes," said Bertha very simply, "the old have had mothers as well as the young, though they have so long out-lived them, that they seem to the world as if they had never belonged to anybody older than themselves. Wulfred, for all his grey hairs, often talks about his mother; and," she added, as if she could no longer keep within her own bosom a secret which oppressed it, "I will tell you all. I am sure Wulfred, as he lies there on his sick bed, would not wish to conceal it from you, had he but strength to tell it."

"To what do you allude?" inquired Cædmon, in a tone of surprise.

"Listen," replied Bertha: "you see how attentive Wulfred has become but on hearing me name this strange matter. Shall I tell Cædmon all?" she added, appealing to the old crusader.

"Ay, all, if thou wilt," he answered; "go on."

"Wulfred has often told me," she continued, "that when he accompanied the Norman baron, the Lord de Beaumont, to the Holy Land, he followed his master, as well as he could, in all his ways; because he thought it a matter of duty so to do. But Wulfred proved a better soldier than a bead-teller; and he was young then, and cared more for the spirits of our ancient Saxon fountains, than he did for the image of the Holy Virgin of Palestine; and so he neglected the opportunity to go with the Lord de Beaumont when he went to do homage at her altar."

"It was in the city of Jerusalem," said Wulfred, "after it had been captured by the Christians."

"Well," continued Bertha, "he neglected to perform his duty at the shrine; and by his own account, thought more of his own mother who lay dead in her grave, than he did of God's Mother who was living in heaven. But the blessed Virgin herself taking pity on him, she appeared to him in a dream, and upbraided him with the neglect of worshipping her image at her altar; and more especially upbraided him for loving his own mother's memory better than hers. Yet, as Our Lady is ever pitiful, she assured him that it was his mother's wish he should love the Queen of Heaven more than herself, and pay homage at her altar; and, furthermore, she told him that he should live to receive an assurance of this from his mother's spirit; but that such had been his want of faith, she could not promise this would take place till his last hour drew nigh; and then she should appear to him."

"And last night she did appear," said Wulfred, who had eagerly listened to catch each word of the discourse as Bertha related those wonders the old crusader had so often told her were among the strange chances of his early life. "Last night my mother did appear to me; she stood there, a blessed spirit, and smiled upon me. I shall meet her yet again, where she waits for me now—in heaven; at least I hope so; I hope to meet her there, by the merits of the saints, and holy men's prayers——"

"The monks of St. John, and the nuns of St. Bennet, have told their beads for you, by night and by day, for the last week, Wulfred; they have done it out of pure charity," said Bertha.

"May their prayers be heard," replied Wulfred; "for though dying as a grief to the flesh is nothing, yet it is a sore thing for the spirit. Of the dust we came, and to that we must return; it is natural. But the spirit to wing itself away somewhere, and not know where, it is that makes a man shudder."

"I have heard holy men declare," said Cædmon, "that the finest spirits are ever touched with the liveliest fears at the approach of death; since they know not the issue—the dreadful uncertainty of what is to come. The consciousness of their own demerits, and the infinite perfections of God—of God too pure even to behold iniquity; these things make them suffer,—these are the fears that sharpen the arrows of death. Fears such as these, a good man like yourself, Wulfred, must experience. But you are a religious man also: remember, therefore, the rock of mercy, and lay hold of it, in this your hour of need. Oh! that you could teach patience to my mind, as I do now to yours, with as great certainty of speaking that which ought to comfort."

"Let me—let me comfort you," said Wulfred eagerly; "let me do something for you, my dear young master, ere I depart, to prove how devoted, even in death, is the last follower of the noble Oswy, to the last descendant of his house. Let me do this, and I shall die happier, easier. Who has injured you? what has happened?"

"The worst that could befall me. I have quarreled with, and I must say it—I have misbehaved myself to Abbot Baldwin. A circumstance arose which displeased him; he struck me a blow, and I could not brook it. I attempted I know not what, to shew my resentment; I told him to his teeth, I was more noble in blood, lineage, and spirit, than himself. I abandoned the abbey, broke every law of the school to

which I am sworn, and fled to thee. I could not brook a blow."

"No!" exclaimed Wulfred, as the light of an impassioned feeling once more flashed from his dim eyes; his countenance, for the moment, becoming flushed, and his whole frame seeming to undergo a change, so greatly was he affected by what he heard. Indeed the effect on his countenance, without any exaggeration, might be compared to the sudden light which bursts from the electric fire within the cloud, and for an instant illumines with a brilliancy more than natural the whole of its dark surface. "No! Cædmon, no!" he continued with energy, "a Saxon-born thane must not brook a blow. We will resent it. I was thy grandsire's armour-bearer—I am still thy vassal,—I can do something yet—could I but rise from this bed;" he made an effort as if he would do so. "I would yet arm me, and avenge thy wrongs on the cruel Norman's head—but, alas!" he added, as he relapsed into weakness from the exhaustion produced by his own energy, "it is bootless; it will not be; human weakness prevails, and the old servant can do nothing but weep with his master when the sword that he would wield for him drops from his feeble grasp. Life wanes fast with me; Cædmon, come nearer; give me thy hand,—and hear all I can do to serve thee."

He paused—Cædmon obeyed; and after having in some measure recovered strength, he thus continued, but in weaker accents, and in periods that became slow and broken. "Oh, young man, hear the last monitions of a dying friend. Thou hast a noble spirit, but beware it leads thee not into vain contests with those who are as much too powerful for thy weak and oppressed condition, as yonder weapon is for this weak and unnerved hand. The Norman has now the rule in England; the Saxon is degraded to the dust. Let it be so for a while. It is God's will, and there is no fighting against that; and remember, though the Norman may make a slave of thee, he cannot degrade the mind of a brave man; his mind is his better part. Remember that merit in a low fortune is nobler than the station of a prince where there is none. Our Lord Oswy was wont to say so, and he was a wise and a good chief. And now, farewell, my beloved young master—farewell. Bertha knows all I would have done about my burial. She will tell you, and you will see the last rites done decently; you will see this worn-out body laid in the dust in peace."

Cædmon wept, and assured him he would do all to fulfil his

wishes when he should be no more; and would never cease to cherish with affection the memory of one so good, so devoted to himself, as Wulfred.

"Yes," said the dying man, "you will remember me, I believe it; and you will help to pile the cairn, where the bones of poor Wulfred, the faithful follower of your house, are laid to rest. And to this cottage will you sometimes come also; you will not pass the door, that was Wulfred's, at the eventide, without stopping to cast a kindly look upon it; and the thoughts will come back upon your heart, of how often you have seen the old man, sitting at his own door, as the light of the setting sun shone upon his white hairs, and he would rise to bid you welcome. You will give a sigh, may be, to see how altered are all things since he was gone; that the little garden, in which he laboured, lies neglected; that it failed, when his strength failed who for so long a time had dressed it; and then, dear Cædmon, you will pluck a flower from among the weeds that will spring up, and will bear it away with you, for the memory's sake of old Wulfred."

Again he paused; a little recovered, he spoke once more. "And if you can—but no, you cannot, for you must fly this country. Never mind it then. Bertha will take home to her my dog, old Harold there; she will care for him, as long as the poor thing lives, in memory of me. And my Lady Alicia de Beaumont is not hard-hearted, though she is a Norman. I hope she will let my kinswoman, Bertha, have the cottage; all I have in it, I leave to her, except my arms; they will go to Edmund—to—I feel very chilled, my sight is dimmer, and the room seems to turn with me."

He sunk back on his straw as he spoke; Bertha offered him again a cordial, but he could taste only a few drops.

"No," he said, "no! it will not help me; life is on the wane, and my minutes are nearly told, the glass has nearly dropt its last sands for me. On every limb Death lays his hand; by and by he will chill the heart, and when that is cold, who would wish to linger here? Pray for me."

Both Cædmon and Bertha did so: as they sunk on their bended knees beside his straw, they prayed with fervour.

Wulfred now changed visibly; he could no longer raise himself from the pillow, but he lifted up his hands, and seemed to gaze intently on his fingers' ends: "They are numbed," he said; "I have no feeling in them, and my legs and my feet are all as cold as ice. Is it night yet? it is very dark and dull."

"It is not night yet, my dear Wulfred," replied Cædmon; "but evening—the sun is almost set—there will soon be no light."

"Oh! but there will be light for me," said Wulfred; "I see it now, for an angel with bright locks, like waving gold, and wings as silvered as those of the dove on the altar of our church, flits before my bed and smiles upon me. And now the figure beckons, and lifts her veil—Oh, holy saints! it is my mother's spirit! she comes to watch over the death-bed of her son, to call him hence to her. Oh, blessed mother! I come—Wulfred will not tarry—Cædmon—Bertha—where are you? gone—no one near me—save me!"

"From what, Wulfred; who would harm you."

"The Norman, the Norman victors; they have me down now—down at the base of the cross. They have borne away Oswy's body; and would keep me from that blest spirit who now watches for my soul,—but I will not be kept off—will not—will not—my mother —"

He fainted, the last word but half-spoken, for the efforts he had made in these the last moments of his wanderings, to raise himself up in his bed, had been too much for him. Once more did Bertha give him her assistance, as Cædmon ran and brought fresh water from a neighbouring spring. He sprinkled it on Wulfred's face; but it was all in vain: nothing could restore him to his senses; and in that state, after a convulsive struggle of some length (for Wulfred had been a strong man, so that the parting of body and soul was not without difficulty), the worn and weary soldier passed out of life, and slept the sleep of death. Notwithstanding his late convulsive pangs, so happy a serenity overspread his countenance at the moment of his departure, that it seemed as if he were not dead,—as if he had but sunk into that "saving" rest, which is often but the prelude of recovery, and not of dissolution.

Cædmon closed down Wulfred's eyes, and kissed his cold lips, as he said affectionately, "Farewell to thee, dear Wulfred—thou last, thou only and true friend of the orphan Cædmon. Something tells me we shall not long be sundered; and that the old and the young head may even yet be gathered under one cairn."

The nobly born youth then turned to comfort Bertha, but she would not be comforted; for now her kinsman Wulfred was gone, she felt she was indeed bereaved.

"There is not a living thing left to care for such a poor old creature as I am," she said between her sobs; "for who cares

for the old, who belong to nobody, and have nothing to give or to leave? I and the dog there are all that Wulfred leaves to care for one another. And I had been so long used to my kinsman and his ways; and at last he got so feeble, and gave me so much trouble and care—poor old Wulfred! I shall miss the trouble he gave me now. And he had a brave heart, and he was kind, there's not a thing left to be kind to me now."

And so she ran on, bewailing herself. Cædmon, finding all his efforts at consolation ineffectual, in these, the first moments of her violent grief, and fearing, when he should be gone, the poor creature might suffer by that stupifying sorrow which, in persons of strong feeling, is so apt to succeed the first burst of a passionate distress, thought he should render her a service by giving her employment. He gave her instructions, therefore, what to do about gathering together the few Saxons in the neighbourhood, who would, he knew, gladly follow Wulfred's remains to their last home; and having learnt from Bertha all his wishes about the place of burial, etc., proposed to pass the night in the cottage, and on the morrow to attend the body of his friend to the grave, as he had desired.

All was speedily arranged, and Cædmon now endeavoured to compose his spirits, and to gain a few hours rest for the night.

CHAPTER XXV.

Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,
Their human passions now no more.

GRAY.

The shrinking band stood oft aghast,
At the impatient glance she cast—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Ben-venue
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warbler of the brake.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE course of our narrative now leads us to a scene wild and strange, where art had combined with nature to render it imposing.

In the very heart of the dreary waste of Dartmoor, on the side of a lofty range of heights, watered at their base by the rapidly flowing Dart, was seen an ancient and stunted wood of oaks; so old that they seemed to have become dwarfed by the very decrepitude of age: yet, as if to soften and embellish their decay, time had entwined and garlanded their bald heads with many an ivy crown; and many a coat of the finest and thickest moss encircled their limbs, and protected their trunks from the rudeness of the blast, and the fierceness of those tempests so common in the elevated region in which they stood. It was indeed a region replete with wonder and with awe; and seemed to rise with a more daring front towards the azure dome, than the summits of the surrounding heights. It overlooked, to a considerable extent, the vast and silent moor, and those majestic granite tors which rose, as watch-towers, on every side.

Around the wood of stunted oaks was seen many a rude circle of stones, the temples of an ancient superstition; the hallowed cromlech, the funeral cairn, and the rocks consecrated to the rites of heathenism by their deep and indented basins. The gentle rill of a pure spring that here found its

source, ran trickling down the hill towards the river below, to which it carried the small tribute of its waters. The music of the mountain winds, wild as the harp of Æolus, awakened by their unseen touch, was here heard in melancholy cadence; whilst the rush of the river, as it made its swift course over innumerable rocks in the valley of the Dart, harmonized perfectly with their tones, and with all those sounds of nature, that seem not for a moment to break the silence of the desert, but rather to add to its awe; even as a requiem for the dead adds to the solemnity of that silent sorrow which is observed by the mourning train.

The eye, from this spot, wandered over such a scene of grandeur as we have described, till the view was terminated in the far horizon by the waters of the Atlantic, only to be distinguished from the sky above, by a more brilliant and silvery appearance, than was presented by the clouds with which they seemed to mingle. Opposite to the height on whose side was the wood we have just named, arose another eminence, called in the ancient British language Bairdown, or the Hill of Bards. There the harps of a hundred priests of the ancient Druids had once rung out their "glorious chime," as bearing them in their hands, and awakening their chords in the ceremonies of the sacred procession, "the white-robed bards" had slowly descended to the great temple in the cursus, near the rock idol of the plain.

This spot, "the lonely wood of Wistman," had witnessed many an august and fearful scene of Celtic superstition; there the light of rising suns had fallen on the hecatomb of human sacrifice. The shrieks of human agony had startled the eagle from her cleft in the rock, as she screamed again in answer to the cry, and soared on her affrighted wing to where the accents of misery could no longer reach her amid the clouds.

These were scenes of ancient days, that had once been common amid those stern solitudes of nature. In the times of the Saxons, they had been scarcely of a milder character, when Woden and Frea were the gods of the people, till the latter became humanized and enlightened by their conversion to Christianity. Yet, still, though no longer heathen, so primitive a race retained an attachment to their old places of worship, that lingered among them for many generations; and was not the less tenaciously retained, because, after the Norman conquest, laws and edicts had been employed in the endeavour to root it out. Thus was the law against the superstitious worship of sacred fountains (enacted not long after the Con-

quest) especially aimed against that most favoured of all the ancient rites with which the Saxons had mingled their observance of Christianity.

The little rill we have noticed in Wistman's wood (whose waters, at the time of which we speak, were carefully collected at their head, into a large granite basin) was a fountain of this nature. It was guarded by a Saxon sibyl, who made her dwelling in a rude and rocky habitation near the spot. The whole scene was imposing, and calculated to impress the imagination with a sense of the sublime, such as elevates the thoughts, and calls up "a motion and a spirit," which in the midst of such profound repose becomes attentive to those holiest of precepts, that man, in the immensity of nature, seems to derive from the "still, small voice" that is of God alone; and finds a tongue in every rock and stream, "sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

It was in the scene we have here but slightly sketched, there stood, at the time we open this chapter, the ancient Saxon sibyl, Thorbiorga; a descendant, after whom she was named, of the old Norse fortuneteller and witch, who, according to tradition, had nine sisters no less famous than herself in reading the book of Fate; and who, in all probability, made a lucrative trade by imposing on the credulity of the multitude.

In England, at the period of which we write, many such sibyls of the Saxon race still lingered, more especially in the West. Though both in person and by profession they were obnoxious to the law, yet had they such an influence, not only with their own countrymen, who still clung to their ancient customs, but even with the Normans, who often resorted to them for the benefit of their supposed supernatural powers, that they were seldom sought out or brought forward to receive the punishment they deserved.

The Saxon sibyl we have mentioned sat in a rude stone chair, originally constructed by the Druids, that stood before the fountain as it lay clear as a mirror at her feet. She was neither old nor young; of a tall and commanding stature, with large but not ill-formed features; and something there was in her countenance and demeanour which inspired respect. She was attired in a gown of green cloth, her head covered with a cap made of the skin of a black lamb, being edged with that of a white cat. About her throat she wore a necklace of large glass beads, called adders' eggs (a remnant of Druidical superstition), and from her waist depended a rosary of the same. On her feet she had sandals, tied with

leather thongs; she wore also a Hunlandic, or magic girdle, in which was stuck her implements of the black art; a wand, or staff of ash, ornamented with brass knobs, rested by her side. Her hair, straying from beneath the lamb's-skin cap, hung long and loose down her back. Altogether there was something wild, but striking in her face and figure. She sat, knotting a long piece of twine, and tying into each knot a bunch of rosemary, yew, or bitter herbs. Whilst thus employed, she murmured in a low and not unmusical voice the magical song in the old Norse poetry called the *Vardlokur*. As she did so, she glanced her eye from time to time to the small narrow path which wound up the side of the hill towards the fountain where she was seated.

At length the sibyl paused in her song, and listened. Then arose the mournful melody of a funeral dirge, that was echoed among the hills; and immediately after, turning round the abutment of a large rock (that had concealed those who approached from her view, till they were within a few yards of the sacred fountain), Thorbiorga saw the funeral train she had expected, and in whose service she was about to be engaged in the performance of certain ancient Saxon superstitions appertaining to the dead.

First came two aged women, followed by a few Saxons of the humbler class, and several children. Then a number of young persons advanced, bearing in their hands boughs of trees or flowers, and singing, in a wild and melancholy manner, a Christian requiem for a departed soul. Next came an old Saxon priest, attended by Cædmon the page, mounted on a horse, who, with a few other horsemen, followed as mourners for the dead.

Cædmon was now in a very different mood from that in which we last saw him: he was calm; but in the melancholy that overspread his features, there was something that indicated a sorrow which had more in it than the soft and subduing grief occasioned by the sight of death; it was more like the secret working of some powerful passion of the mind.

After him came, laid on a bier, supported by four bearers, a corpse. It was covered with a cloak, and strewed with funeral herbs and flowers. The procession was terminated by a few of the poorer Saxons, all weeping, singing, or lamenting. The funeral train stopped before the sacred fountain.

Thorbiorga arose; on seeing the priest she bowed reve-

rently. "Welcome, Father Oswald," she said, "welcome. What son of the Saxon people is it who is brought here to lay his bones among the old cairns of our fathers? to lay them in the wood that was first consecrated when the Saxons became Christian, to the worship of the true faith."

"It is one," replied an aged man standing at the head of the bier, "who in early life bore his arms manfully; brave in battle, faithful in service. Age has at length borne him down to the grave; and here do we bring him, according to his last request, that he may lay his bones among his fathers, where the Norman will not disturb his dust. Our good priest, Father Oswald, the true friend of his poor Saxon countrymen, has come hither to give him Christian burial. He will not ask, as a Norman priest would, a mortuary fee to give him so much of English earth as may serve for his last home. Our conquerors make us pay for the very graves they have stolen from our soil. Thou, Thorbiorga—thou wilt here do thy part,—thou wilt sprinkle the corpse with the waters of the sacred fountain, so that no evil spirit shall have the power to disturb it, or to borrow its form, and so to appear, as it were, on earth again, after the cairn has been heaped upon the dead. Thou wilt also make thy funeral song for his decease, and leave none of our ancient Saxon rites unaccomplished."

Thorbiorga bowed to the ceorl (for it was one of no meaner rank who had addressed her). "Thou hast honoured the brave and the poor by thy presence, noble ceorl," she said; "all thy wishes shall be fulfilled. I will make my lament for the brave, who falls asleep, after the toils of a faithful life, even as he would after the toils of a day of battle. The mountain winds, and the birds of the desert, shall warble their wild music to the dirge of death. The corpse shall be sprinkled, the flowers shall be strewn, the cairn shall be heaped, and no rite left unaccomplished. And hither shall the Saxon come, who seeks in solitude and mountain independence, all that is left of freedom to him who is the stern contemner of these cruel times, to make his moan for a brother."

Many who were present wept as Thorbiorga alluded to their unhappy and enslaved state.

She paused, and thus continued: "And when the hawthorn flings from its snowy blossoms its perfume on the gale; and when the child of spring, the primrose, raises her meek eye, and looks on the opening loveliness around her, where bird, and breeze, and shower, and suns that cheer the earth, are

all returned,—then will Thorbiorga, at each glad season of the year, come hither to commemorate the obsequies of him who is now to be laid beneath the turf. All honour is due to the memory of the brave.”

Thus, in a language that carried with it many of the epithets and much of the spirit of poetry, did Thorbiorga, as was common with those of her avocation, address the assembled Saxons in honour of the dead.

As she concluded, Cædmon, who had hitherto stood silent, approached the bier, uncovered the corpse, and looked upon it mournfully. It displayed the remains of a very old man, who had once been a man-at-arms; for his shield, sword, head-piece, coat of mail, and javelin, were all laid on the bier. The countenance, though fixed in the pallid hues of death, presented the composed character of one who sleeps calmly. It was that of Wulfred.

Cædmon clasped his hands together, looked on the corpse intently, and then said: “And art thou gone, Wulfred? is all closed on earth with thee? and was it but to find thee on thy death-bed—to receive thy parting breath—to feel the last pressure of thy feeble grasp, and to answer thy looks that spoke to me, when thy tongue could no longer find utterance,—was it but for this I sought thee in the hour of my distress! Thou true and only friend of the orphan boy, whose fathers thou hast served so long—farewell to thee, brave Wulfred; thou wilt rest well, after thy long day of faithful service. Farewell! I, who received thy last breath, will lay thy head in the ground, and then will I bethink me in what way it will best become the grandson of Oswy to honour the memory of his faithful follower in death.”

So spoke Cædmon, as the humble and simple mannered train of mourners stood somewhat apart from the body, leaving the ceorl and the young Saxon, the first in rank present, to assist in the more immediate rites that were to be performed ere the priest did his office for the dead.

These rites were few and simple, though the superstitions of paganism were singularly mingled with those of the obscured Christianity of the period. To keep off the demons of Saxon belief, Thorbiorga sprinkled the corpse with some of the lustral waters of the sacred fountain, which she had taken from the spring-head in an oaken bowl. This she did with a dignity of manner and energy of expression the most impressive, as she muttered some words of grief, following the sun's course, in pacing round the bier and performing the lustral rite.

The body was next laid on the ground, within one of the many circles of stone that were found on the spot. The priest then performed his part of the obsequies, and no sooner was this ended, than all who had followed in the train commenced the work of burial. It consisted in throwing, with shovels they had brought with them for the purpose, a quantity of earth over the corpse; for it was the ancient custom of the Saxons not to break the ground, but to lay their dead on the surface, and to pile the heap of earth and the cairn, or heap of stones, upon them. The earth being thrown over Wulfred, the attendant mourners next each brought a stone, and so continued to pile together loose pieces of granite, taken from the surrounding rocks, singing and lamenting as they did so, till the cairn was raised.

Then did the priest advance, and plant a rude cross of wood, that he held in his hands, upon the grave. The armour of the deceased was next placed upon it, and there, under the watch of Thorbiorga, it was to remain till the third day after the funeral, when the next of kin, if a freeman (for Wulfred died such, though originally a bondman) would be at liberty to claim it, and remove it from his grave. On these trophies of the warrior, agreeably to the most ancient of the Saxon rites, did the sibyl of her people now hang her knot of fate.

The funeral ceremonies accomplished, the mourning train retreated in the same order in which they had advanced, without any refreshment but such as the pure fountain might supply to slake their thirst; for Wulfred's kindred were not of a rank to give one of those funeral feasts (often converted into scenes of riot and debauchery) that were usual at the burials of the nobly born and more wealthy Saxons.

Cædmon alone lingered; he stayed on purpose to consult Thorbiorga, not knowing to whom else he could turn for counsel in his present strait, now that his venerated friend Wulfred was no more. In proportion as his former passions had been tumultuous, they had now sunk into stillness, but not into forgetfulness. The indignity he had suffered at the hands of the Norman abbot was to him an indelible dishonour; it was to his mind what the barbed arrow is to the body that it strikes—it rankled and festered in the wound. He knew not what to do, nor where to seek reparation for his injured spirit; for Baldwin was a churchman, and Cædmon a Christian; the person of a priest must be sacred in his eyes. Bitter, therefore, were his feelings; and he dared not, in his calmer moments, think of raising a hand against the sacred

person of an abbot; yet he felt that to sit down resignedly under such an indignity as he had experienced was impossible. He was desirous, therefore, to find relief for his wounded spirit in a bold and decided change of fortune, where he might shew to Baldwin, and to all the world, that it was from no craven nature, but from a respect towards a churchman, that he had had magnanimity enough to forbear all resentment. A calm and melancholy retrospection of past circumstances had long been the habit of Cædmon's mind; it had hitherto preyed on his heart in secret, and no one saw the fire that lurked within. But now, as a blow strikes from the hardened flint the spark which, till so struck, was unseen, even so had this one violent action roused into a flame all the strong but hitherto suppressed passions of his soul; and a futurity that seemed to darken as it arose, presented itself before his imagination in characters of awe and gloom.

Not knowing on what to decide, in this turmoil of feeling and of thought, he was glad to seize on a way pointed out to him by the superstitions of his own people, to leave his conduct to a mysterious and supernatural guidance, like a clue of destiny which he knew not how to unfold for himself with any hope of success. Nor must Cædmon be hastily condemned for so credulous a purpose; he was no wiser than the age in which he lived, and be it remembered that the Saxons, in those half enlightened times, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, were so imperfectly instructed in the truth, that the direction of Providence was considered by them little better than the will of a stern and overruling fate. Agitated by passions such as we have described, it was no wonder that Cædmon's restless spirit, torturing him with a thousand doubts and struggles, at the moment which seemed to him as the crisis of his fate, determined him at once to rush on destiny, and to learn from the mystic arts of Thorbiorga the course he had to take.

There was a repose, a stillness, in the elevated region in which he now stood, amidst the noblest features of the rugged moor, that harmonized well with this state of feeling; so that, in language which was at once solemn and energetic, he called on Thorbiorga to direct him in this fearful contest of his mind; briefly relating to her those painful circumstances which he deemed derogatory to his honour.

"Speak low," said Thorbiorga; "speak low, in reverence to this sacred spot. Here the eagle in her flight is awed, as she wings her way to the clouds. Speak low, for this is the

hour of the spirit; anon he will darken the fountain, and I will read to thee thy fate. It is the hour of the coming of Thunre; he will brook no voice but his own, to be raised in these wild regions. There are moments when the winds speak also as loud as he; and then will his anger rush abroad, as his dread lightnings flash from tor to tor, and all the rock-girt moor shakes at his thunder."

Awed by her manner, and her words, as the sibyl stretched forth her ashen wand over the sacred fountain, raised her head, and seemed to gaze with her prophetic eye on some spirit, invisible to mortal ken, Cædmon in a low but clear voice, such as would have made itself heard in its articulate whisper, even among a crowd, said—

"Tell me what to do; delay not thy instructions. I am as the stricken hart, that bleeds and thirsts beside the waters, even so stand I beside this fountain."

"As the stricken hart thou shalt not be," said Thorbiorga: "thou shalt strike him whose hand sent its malicious shaft against the smitten hart. I will give thee the means, and shew thee a way to retrieve thy tarnished honour, and to win thee fame."

Cædmon raised his head, looked earnestly at the sibyl as she contemplated the sacred and wonder-working fountain, in which he could see nothing but the mirror-like clearness with which it reflected the deep blue sky, and the wild flowers and tufts of moss that grew and clung about its sides.

"Noble Cædmon," said Thorbiorga, "thou worthy son of a worthy race, mark my instructions. Put on thee, straight, the armour of Wulfred; it is at my command here,—I will account for what I do. Mount thy good steed, grasp Wulfred's shield, bear his javelin in thy hand, and hie thee to yonder plain. There shalt thou meet one to whom thou mayst render a service. This day, ere the sun had risen over yonder hill, did the tyrant Norman, Geoffrey de Malduit, send to me one of his people to learn from me, if this day would be propitious to an enterprise he meditated against an enemy. I did not believe the tale: by acting on the fears of his messenger, I learnt all the truth,—that his master, Geoffrey de Malduit, was about to attempt a most daring deed. On this day the Lady Alicia de Beaumont purposes to quit her castle and commence a pilgrimage to the sacred shrines in Cornwall; and the Lady Adela de Marmoutier goes to Mount St. Michael. Geoffrey means to intercept their progress, to seize by violence the person of the Lady Adela, and to carry her to his own

castle. He has with him a band of resolute mercenaries, and some of those recreant knights who, being disgraced in the Holy Land, have become reckless, and will do, at home, any dishonourable action. You will at once be able to distinguish this band of violent men, as I am further assured, that, in order to screen themselves from detection, they have covered their shields with black cloth, that their proper cognizance may not be known."

"A cowardly act," said Cædmon, "in any knight who may be entitled to bear his arms upon his shield."

"The Lady Alicia de Beaumont," continued Thorbiorga, "is the present possessor of the castle that was thy grandsire Oswy's—that castle should have been thine. Hast thou then, Cædmon, magnanimity of soul sufficient to do a service to her who stands in thy place, in thy lawful inheritance, if right were done to the poor and oppressed Saxon youth?"

"The violence meditated by Geoffrey de Malduit," replied Cædmon, "is alike disgraceful to honour and to manhood. Whilst thus threatened with danger, I see only in the unhappy lady who is the principal object of it, a helpless and persecuted woman, and not an enemy. For the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, though she is in possession of the castle that, by right, should be that of the orphan Cædmon, yet never has she been to him as a personal foe. I quarrel not with her, because ill fate to our house, and his sovereign's favour, gave to that lady's husband, the Lord de Beaumont, our lost Wilsworthy and all its broad lands. Both ladies now, therefore, come before my view as women in danger, threatened by a cruel foe to their honour and their peace. It well becomes, then, the Saxon youth, the grandson of Oswy, to prove to them and all the world he has not lost his father's spirit with his father's lands. Tell me what to do, and I will spare neither heart nor hand in their service. This is a way, indeed, to wipe the stain of dishonour from an ancient name."

"Mount thy horse; give the spur to his sides, and thy best spirit to the enterprise, and never spare thy speed till thou art at Wilsworthy. Demand instant admission to the Lady Alicia, tell her that she owes to one of the despised Saxon race the safety of her own life, and the preservation of the Lady Adela; tell all I have this day told to thee. If thou art swift, there may even yet be time for the warning. I dare trust thee, and thee alone, on such an errand; for did the cruel Geoffrey know it were by my means his enterprise is frustrated, my life would be the forfeit to his revenge. But no matter, though young,

thou art faithful. I will assist thee to arm, for thou mayst meet enemies in thy path."

The sibyl did so; and Cædmon was speedily equipped in the armour of Wulfred. He was about to mount his horse, when suddenly a sound as of something rushing in the air was heard above their heads. Looking upward, they beheld the outspread and dusky wings of a black eagle, the sovereign of these mountain solitudes, and at the period of which we write, a bird not uncommon amongst the rocky crags and majestic tors of Dartmoor. The eagle screamed, as she darted forward, and in another instant soaring to a height that the eye strained to reach in following her flight, at length dropt in the far distance; no doubt having fastened on some prey.

The Saxon sibyl looked on the circumstance with a prophetic eye. "It is well," she said; "thou art favoured, brave youth; the omen never yet failed. There is wrath in the fates, but not to thee. Follow in the direction towards which the bird made her flight, and thou shalt prosper. The prey has not escaped her beak and talons, nor shall Geoffrey de Malduit escape thee. Farewell, and remember thou hast ever a friend in the Saxon woman, Thorbiorga, seek her when thou wilt, in her cell among the rocks."

So saying, she waved her hand, as Cædmon answered with a kindly farewell, and mounting his horse, which was spirited, he set off at as rapid a pace as the steep descent amongst the fragments of broken rock that lay scattered round would admit, with every intention to follow to the letter the instructions of the sibyl.

Cædmon had made his way across the moor, as far as where a small valley terminated a wild and desolate track of country. A wood, neither thick nor very extensive, skirted it on the side nearest to the river Tavy, which here made its picturesque course. A turn in the path entered upon a particular part of the road, which, from having a high bank on the one side, and some rocks and oaks on the other, had almost the character of a defile or pass.

As he approached this spot, Cædmon heard the clash of arms; and a bugle wound its long note, that rang over wood and plain, as confused sounds, shouts, and exclamations, became audible and mingled themselves with the din of battle.

"It is Geoffrey de Malduit," thought Cædmon; "he has availed himself of this pass to stop the ladies and their people;" and setting spurs to his horse, in a few minutes he was within full view of the fray. He saw, however, no women.

The contest was with men, fierce, yet the numbers few. As he approached nearer, a glance at the arms and shield of a mounted warrior, who was vigorously encountering an enemy, informed him at once that the assailed was Sir Henry de Pomeroy, who had with him but a few supporters and his two esquires of the body.

Opposed to him was the assailant Geoffrey de Malduit, and his band of recreants and followers with their shields covered with black cloth.

In another moment Cædmon was at the side of Sir Henry, whose sword had played him false, for it had broken on receiving a blow from an axe that was wielded by the ferocious Geoffrey. In this dilemma, ere Sir Henry could avail himself of another weapon that hung at his saddle-bow, De Malduit raised his axe and prepared to deal a second blow, that would fall on the head, and must be fatal. Cædmon saw the danger, and swift as thought flew to the rescue, and with that happy interference which is often successful from its very daring, interposed between De Pomeroy and death. He dashed forward in front of Sir Henry's horse, and received on his own shield the blow that was intended for the young and gallant knight.

Geoffrey, incensed at being thus deprived of his prey, now turned all his fury on the youth who had snatched it from him,—who had thus, as it were, come between “the lion and his wrath,” and with a second blow struck Cædmon on the head. He was instantly stunned and fell to the ground, as an arrow from another hand penetrated his breast.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy saw the fearful stroke which had thus smote the Saxon, who had saved his life, by a presence of mind and a gallantry of spirit he had never before seen equalled in such a youth. Sir Henry called to his people to preserve the body of Cædmon from being trampled on by the horses. One of his followers succeeded in dragging it out of immediate danger from the press, to a spot near at hand, where Cædmon lay, insensible, but protected by an overhanging rock. There the follower left him, and returned to the scene of action.

We must here pause to say that the quarrel had been unpremeditated. Sir Henry de Pomeroy having that morning accidentally encountered his enemy, as Geoffrey was on his way to intercept the Lady Alicia and her unhappy ward. The insolence of De Malduit had provoked the fray in question, at the moment Sir Henry was on his road to Wilsworthy (after

leaving the abbey, where he had lodged on the previous night), in the hope to procure an interview with the inflexible guardian of his beloved Adela. Cædmon had given his aid soon after the beginning of the fray. And now, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, prompt in extremity, as he was bold and brave in action, in a moment assumed the direction of every one who was with him, with the utmost ease. The huge shields of his assailants, with their sable covering, which was, as he said, "like a pall to their buried honours," were borne before breasts little in accord with the true spirit of chivalry. Those who bore them bent their lowering brows on their gallant foe, and failed not to sound both trumpets and bugles, in the hope to bring to their assistance a reinforcement of their band, which they knew could not be far off, as they were advancing from beneath the shelter of the woods.

No trumpet nor bugle on the part of Sir Henry gave an answering note of defiance to these sounds of alarm; but the shouts of "St. George for England!"—"Advance de Pomeroy!" according to the battle-cry of the few followers who fought on Sir Henry's side, rang till the echoes of the distant rocks, on the opposite banks of the Tavy, repeated their sounds, as the desperate onset was made with the brutal courage of men so hardened and so reckless as were those who composed the band of the bold and lawless Geoffrey.

A cloud of arrows, thick as hail, now fell sharply on Sir Henry and his party, whilst the reinforcement of the enemy came up from the wood. The cries of all who were engaged in the action added to the fearful din, as the sun glanced on the glittering arms of the warriors, and shield dashed against shield—whilst their swords flashed fire as they struck in the heat of battle.

"He is down! he is fallen!—Save De Malduit!—protect his body!" were exclamations which rose from his band, as all rallied round their fallen leader.

This circumstance changed entirely the fortunes of the day. The followers of De Malduit secured their vanquished chief who was severely, though not mortally wounded, and retreated in no very honourable manner from the battle of Black Shields.

No sooner had they done so, than Sir Henry de Pomeroy, more anxious, if it might be, to save the life of Cædmon than to follow the retreat of so despicable an enemy, caused his body to be carefully raised, and bore him alive, but most dangerously wounded, from the field; and there we must leave him, whilst we say a few words respecting the unfortunate Lady Adela.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Rude was his garment, and to rags all rent,
 Ne better had he, ne for better cared ;
 With blister'd hands emongst the cinders brent,
 And fingers filthie, with long nailes unpared,
 Right fit to rend the food on which he fared ;
 His name was Care : a blacksmith by his trade,
 That neither day nor night from working spared,
 But to small purpose yron wedges made ;
 Those be unquiet thoughts that careful minds invade.
SPENSER'S *Fairy Queen*.

IN speaking of the Lady Adela we must retrograde a little, and mention circumstances which happened before the day appointed for her quitting the castle.

On the return of Patch from his mission, her faithful attendant, Grace, had duly reported to her that the letter had been conveyed to Cædmon, as she directed, with all caution ; and the noble Saxon had promised to deliver it with no less secresy into the hands of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and into those of no other person.

Satisfied on these points, the Lady Adela never doubted the rest, and felt convinced in her own mind that Sir Henry de Pomeroy would make some bold attempt for her deliverance. In what way it would be made must be to her a mystery—a mere matter of conjecture ; but she confided in the hope, prayed for its success, and counted the hours as they flew towards her rescue. Yet, though she hoped, she was not cheerful ; a lurking spirit of melancholy, even in her happiest moments, lay deep within her bosom, and forbade her, under any circumstances, to feel very joyous ; so true is it that the more delicate sensibilities in woman, though they tend to the increase of goodness, seldom render their possessor happy.

Many other causes also combined to raise within the gentle bosom of Adela the most painful feelings. She was about to quit Wilsworthy, and the care of her nearest relative, perhaps for ever. She could not but feel that, notwithstanding her extraordinary opposition in the affair of De Pomeroy, in all

other matters her aunt had been most kind, most affectionate to her, and most careful of her happiness. And she now felt, though it might be excused by the circumstances of the case, that the letter she had despatched to Sir Henry, unknown to her guardian, and the services she hoped for at his hands, in contradiction to the wishes of the Lady Alicia, were, after all, but sorry returns for the devoted care and affection of so many years on the part of her kinswoman. These thoughts were great tormentors; for though she did not change her purpose, yet she felt, as all young and good minds must feel, the struggle of doing what is doubtful in secret, as of necessity compromising that ingenuousness of character, so beautiful in youth, and so natural to herself.

On the day previous to her expected departure, she was more than ever depressed in spirits, for, alas! no tidings had she received from Sir Henry, and all about him was wrapt in uncertainty and doubt, those twin offsprings of the old "blacksmith" whose name is "Care," so admirably described by the ancient poet—

"Those be inquiet thoughts that careful minds invade."

On that day the Lady Adela, with the fondness for locality which ever inhabits a mind of feeling and of taste, begged her aunt's permission to be allowed to visit the grounds and woods for the last time before quitting the castle. Permission was granted; but not exactly in the way Adela would have wished it should be, for she was not permitted to visit them alone. She could not, therefore, indulge herself in that luxury of melancholy, in these adieus to her favourite haunts, which the delicate in feeling can never fully enjoy, unless in complete solitude; so true is it that the deepest emotions of the heart rest between God and their possessor, and admit no earthly participation.

Adela sighed as she looked around her at those "pleasant walks" and "deep embowering shades," which she was in all probability destined to see no more; and as she could not give full scope to her feelings in the presence of the damsels who attended her in her ramble, she shortened it and returned in silence to the castle. In her way back, and whilst crossing the hall, she met some of the domestics, and as many of these doffed their caps, or saluted her with some other token of respect, as she looked on each for the last time, she felt for them a degree of interest she had never known before.

"I cannot," she said to one of the attendants, who noticed

her dejection, "I cannot leave anything, animate or inanimate, about the old castle, without feeling how unlikely it is I may ever see it more. No wonder, therefore, I am pained; for these old and valued faces and things are very dear to me,—dearer than ever, now we are about to part. Yet I have been taught by good Father Hilary, who for some time past has endeavoured to prepare my mind for the change, that I ought not to grieve at parting with anything, all being so uncertain here on earth. Our health goes; and who can say it will return? our beauty fades, and never comes back to us. We part with time, often idly, and we know *that* will never come again; we say goodbye to the past day when we retire to rest, and who shall make certain of the morrow? These considerations ought to reconcile us to all the changes that God may think fit to make our portion in the pilgrimage of the world."

Somewhat reconciled, though not cheered, by these and similar reflections, the Lady Adela prepared to meet with composure the Lady Alicia at supper, for the last time before her departure on the morrow. This was no easy task, for though she almost despaired of the assistance of Sir Henry, yet she was every now and then visited by a return of hope, which rendered her fears only the more acute and tormenting.

The Lady Adela and her guardian were to sup this evening in the chamber of the latter, not in the hall, where they would have been surrounded by all the inhabitants of the castle. As the hour drew near, Adela more and more dreaded the meeting; yet scarcely did she know wherefore, as there was nothing new to arise from it. The pain of parting was all she had to expect of an anxious nature; and yet, though convinced of this, she felt as if some unforeseen evil was to result from the meeting, so prone is the desponding mind to take up sorrow of its own accord.

During the whole of this day the aunt and niece had shunned each other, for each felt she had something to hide from the knowledge of the other; each felt she was acting wrong, and therefore avoided as much as possible an intercourse which must be artificial, whence the spontaneous expressions arising from unguarded thoughts and feelings must be banished, and where all the confidence of old times and dear affections no longer could exist. Such a consciousness of change between those who have for years been linked together in the bonds of confiding love is ever attended with so much of self-reproach, that it was natural the ladies Adela and Alicia should now

fear to meet each other more than they would to meet an avowed enemy, with whom they had never known the charm of unreserved intercourse and the blessings of devoted friendship.

They met almost in silence, and had recourse to a well-mannered reserve, as a shelter from that renewal of familiarity which both seemed to dread. Each was determined in her purpose, the one to enforce the convent, and the other, if possible, to escape it; no wonder, therefore, each feared that burst of feeling, which, setting at nought all the efforts of self-control, is generally followed by a candid communication of purposes and desires, springing from the inmost recesses of the heart.

They said little during supper; their manner was studiously courteous; but it never once relaxed—never so unbent as to allow either to touch on any subject of discourse that would awaken the sensibilities of woman. They were calm and friendly; and as the Lady Alicia took pains to keep about her the ladies, and the chaplain, who also supped at the same table, the awkwardness of being left alone with Adela, under such circumstances, was completely avoided.

The hour of rest drew nigh, and as the unhappy girl was to depart at early dawn, her guardian felt she must now submit to the ceremony of taking leave of her. She summoned, therefore, the utmost resolution to her aid, and bore her part in these, the most trying moments of the evening, with her accustomed ease. She looked even cheerful, without the least appearance of such an air of composure being assumed.

But the less practised heart of Adela could not so master or mask its real feelings, and she burst into tears as she folded her arms around her guardian's neck and earnestly and affectionately begged her blessing. The Lady Alicia gave it with a solemnity of aspect that was truly impressive, yet she said little; she dared not trust herself with many words, but she looked disturbed, as if she felt much, whilst she once more gave a last adieu to Adela, and under pretext that she should hasten to take rest to prepare her for her journey on the morrow, hurried her from the room to the melancholy solitude of her own apartment, where she never once closed her eyes during the night.

On the morrow, as arranged, and under a strong guard for her safety, at an early hour, she set out for St. Michael's. The far-famed Mount of St. Michael is too remarkable in itself to be here passed in silence; and ere the unfortunate Lady Adela

is committed to its bounds, we must pause to say a word or two about it.

The Mount, though now but an isolated rock, shewing its castle-crowned crest in the midst of the sea, was once, according to tradition, an inland rocky eminence, rising in an extensive plain. In ages so remote that no record exists respecting them, the encroachment of the waves upon this extensive flat is believed by geologists to have completely changed the scene, and to have brought the combined waters of the British, Irish, and Atlantic oceans to insulate the rock, and to form that bay which is now one of the most beautiful in Europe.

From the earliest times, the Mount has been celebrated as a place chosen for the rites of superstition. During the sway of the ancient British priesthood, it was dedicated to Belus, or the sun, and committed to the charge of a band of female druids, amongst whom the most aged was held as a prophetess, and delivered her predictions from the apex of the Mount, or there performed the cruel and unhallowed rites of human sacrifice. One of the most ancient names of the rock, in all probability, alludes to this practice, as it signified, in the Cornish tongue, "the mountain tomb." It was not, however, permitted to remain for ever in ignorance of the true faith. According to a tradition still current in the West, about the year of our Lord 495, a holy hermit retired hither, and the apparition of St. Michael the Archangel appearing to him in a vision of the night, he named the Mount after his glorified visitant, and in a few years a monastery was erected on the sacred spot. To this Milton alludes in his *Lycidas*, when he speaks of—

"The great vision of the guarded mount."

Hence was it, from a very early period, consecrated to the worship of the Christian faith, and it soon rose into great celebrity as a place of pilgrimage. Indeed, so famous was it in this respect, that during the Middle Ages (and till the time of the Reformation), thousands and thousands of both sexes made their way to the shrine of St. Michael's in Cornwall, where such immunities had been granted to it, by Gregory and other popes, that a third part of his penances was remitted to every sinner who there made his prayers and oblations on the day of the Archangel, or on the Eve of St. John. William, Earl of Mortaigne and Cornwall, and nephew of William the Conqueror, founded in the Mount a cell for hermetical monks;

and soon after a nunnery was founded and endowed on the same spot, as the ancient chronicler says, "being placed contiguous to the monastery, in order to prove the superiority of the spirit, and the triumphs of the mind over the senses, according to the improved plan commended by Gilbert of Sempringham, in the year 1148." The nuns were Cistercian.

But we will not follow up this subject; we will not trench on the records of the regular historian more than is absolutely necessary for the purposes of our tale: we shall here, therefore, add but a few observations of our own, derived from a personal acquaintance with the scene.

St. Michael's Mount is an object fitted for the pencil of the painter, or the imagination of the poet, though it is of no great height, being not much more than two hundred feet above the level of the sea. The castle, the chapel, the ancient buildings with which it is crowned—the broken, scattered, and jagged masses of granite of which it is composed, from the base to the summit—the sea for ever breaking over the lower portions of the rocks—the vast expanse of ocean, the beautiful bay, and the distant view of Penzance, with the villages and hamlets that skirt the shores, are all striking, and combine to form a truly noble picture, rendered the more imposing by the air of defiance which distinguishes the old and weather-beaten watch-towers of the castle. The spells of antiquity, than which none are more potent with the poetic mind, seem to hang about the warlike Mount, and when the tide is up, and it is surrounded by its girdle of waters, cutting off all communication with the land, the interest is complete, and becomes invested with a character of wonder and of awe.

It was in one of the cells belonging to the nuns of St. Michael, which looked out on the broad ocean, above the brow of the old rock, that, soon after the events related in the opening of this chapter, a female sat before its little window, with her eyes fixed on the scene around. The alternate agitation and repose of the waves appeared to engage her thoughtful and melancholy spirit. She was dressed in the white gown, the black scapula, and the white mantle and veil of a novice. In her hand she held a rosary, and, after a while, by the motion of her fingers, she seemed to be telling her beads, as the rule under which she had commenced her noviciate required she should do, at certain hours of the day. But though her fingers moved, they did so mechanically, for her thoughts seemed still to wander over the broad ocean, and to give that liberty to the mind which was denied to the person

of the captive in her cell. Need the reader be told it was the Lady Adela who thus mused?

The hour was one of deep repose; the sun was slowly sinking behind masses of fleecy clouds, and as he descended lower and lower towards the watery horizon, the effects of the glowing light and of the increasing shadows gave a character of indescribable majesty to the scene.

There are moments when the very hopelessness of our distress gives a calm to the mind, which it cannot receive under less calamitous, but more agitating circumstances. Even so was it now with the Lady Adela; she had already been long enough in the convent to experience the severity of those means, exercised by a haughty and unsparing superior, that gave her no hope finally to escape her toils. Accustomed from her earliest years to be absolutely under the command of another, and of a passive temper, gentle, even to timidity, deeply impressed with the most reverential ideas of duty, Adela did not dream of resistance. She thought only of her unhappy lot, and in the calm of her despair, indulged a fond but fruitless regret for the past.

In this state of mind she had of late found some temporary relief in contemplating at the evening hour that ocean which is so fertile in supplying images to the mind imbued with a depth of feeling, which enables it to commune with the poetry of nature. Indeed so noble are the emotions arising from a contemplation of the vast and the sublime, that, for the moment, the afflicted spirit seems to quit its narrow house, to soar on the wing of the seraph, and to be with God alone.

So was it now with Adela: the rush of the sounding waves, the screams of the sea-mew, as they circled among the clouds, or winged their way to their nests in the rocks that beetled over the "salt flood,"—the interminable expanse of waters, mingling, as it were, with the heavens above. All impressed her mind with feelings of the deepest reverence; and amidst the majesty of creation, the spirit of Adela felt, for a while, as if it were placed beyond the tyranny of man.

"Alas!" said Adela, giving utterance to her sad thoughts, "what is it I regret? A few years of life that I had hoped to pass in the world with all I loved, and with one——" she paused,—tears rose in her eyes,—she wiped them off and said, "wherefore should I regret him, since Time has no stay, and ever takes in his flight more than he gives? Had I continued in the world, in a few years, I might, perhaps, have lost all I there loved; or they might have become to me as dead, as I am now

to them. The burial in the cell does but anticipate that of the tomb. Oh! how like the passage of a human creature in this conflicting world, is that of the noble galley which I see yonder, gliding gently into this beautiful bay. Many who now sail in her, perhaps, are fast friends or dearest kindred; yet those who long continue to sail in her must look for sorrows and separations; and the youngest mariner now in that vessel, did he go hence and return in a few years to seek his shipmates, would, in all probability, find them all departed, and that he but remained, like the last of a wreck, to strive alone on the waters of life!"

As Adela (who, like many a prisoner, had acquired the habit of sometimes giving utterance, in her loneliness, to the musings of her mind) finished this sentence, a voice exclaimed—"The waters of life, dear lady? Why, if you mean yonder wide, dreary, and dismal sea, that I am weary of looking at from morning till night, you had better call it the waters of Babylon, beside which, as old Father Hilary used to tell us, the captive Jews sat down and wept; for I am sure they are such to us. If it were not that I try to look cheerful, because you look so melancholy and miserable, I should have cried my eyes out before now, for being shut up in this dreadful old place, perched up upon a rock, like a parcel of sea-gulls in the middle of the sea; only we are not so well off as they, because we have no wings to fly away from it."

Adela turned her head towards the well-known speaker, and the rosy, half-crying, half-smiling, plump, and good-humoured face of Grace Bolt appeared, in the midst of such a nun's dress as was worn by the lay sisters, who did the menial offices of the house. Such a face as that of Grace, surrounded by a white chin-cloth and a dismal black veil, with not a bit of her hair to be seen, looked most comically out of place—as much so as the chubby cheeks of a boy, carved in stone, intended to represent a cherub, but far more resembling an infant Bacchus, may now and then be seen decorating the mortuary stones or pillars of a churchyard. It surprised even her mistress, who exclaimed—

"How now, Grace! who has put you on such a dress as this?"

"Why, my Lady Abbess, to be sure," answered Grace; "she who puts on us all the dismal things of this place. And it is all for your sake, my dear young lady, that I bear it; or not the best lady abbess that ever wore a head, should have put such a dark, ugly, coarse, shapeless looking gown as this

over my back, I do assure you ; and not to let a bit of one's hair be seen either—as if my hair were as grey as her own. I declare I didn't know myself again, when I took a peep in the only mirror that I have yet seen in the house, that which hangs at the back of the image of Our Lady in the little side-chapel. Well, to be sure, there's only one thing to console one for having no young pages here to look at one ; for I would not be seen in such a Witch of Endor's dress, as I have now on, for all the world."

Grace Bolt, in her feeling lamentation over the change of her attire made by the severe lady abbess, to whom the damsel's smart personal decorations had been an offence, quite forgot the cause that had brought her thus unseasonably to intrude upon her mistress in her cell. Adela questioned her about it ; but Grace thus finished the account of her own metamorphosis before she would proceed to the matter.

"Why, my lady, you must know, that my lady abbess said that to-morrow was to be a great day at the Mount—a great day for all sorts of pilgrims and palmers, from far distant lands ; for to-morrow is the Eve of St. John ; and she said that on such a day, she would not have anybody about her, to be seen in the chapel, or elsewhere, unless she had on the dress of a religious, be she nun, novice, or lay sister. And so my lady abbess said, that as I was here with you, if I did not choose to conform to rule, I should go, and never more set foot on the Mount. Then I thought of you, my poor dear lady, and that without me, you would certainly break your heart outright in this purgatory upon earth, as I may call it ; and so, for your sake, dear lady, I determined to undergo the greatest of misfortunes ; and I let the old abbess make a fright of me, as you see she has done. And now I am one of the discreet, I think she called me."

"The *discretæ*, you mean, or lay sisters, who attend upon the abbess and the convent," said the Lady Adela. "It was kind in you, my dear Grace, not to leave me ; for indeed I could not bear to part from you ; and yet to continue to keep you here against your will would be most unkind."

"It would be a downright robbing and murdering of me, my dear lady," said Grace : "robbing me of the liberty God gave me to look on the face of my fellow-creatures ; that is, of one-half of my fellow-creatures, for here we see nothing but women, and they as miserable as ourselves ; and murdering me, by killing me alive, as I may say, with crying and breaking my heart. But I don't mean to stay here, nor to let

you either, one hour more than is necessary to make our escape; and then, dear lady, do but pluck up a good spirit, and we will cross the seas, get into Normandy, and you shall there take possession of your own castle and vassals, and leave the old abbess here to scream after us, with the gulls, when we are fled and away; and if she sends a flight of them to carry her rating over the waters, we will forgive her."

"Alas! there is no hope of escape," said Adela: "else, rather than submit to have vows forced upon me, that my whole heart disclaims, I would attempt it. But hope there is none."

"None!" said Grace; "there is Hope, and I would find her and have her up, though she had sunk down with her anchor, that the minstrels sing about, to the bottom of Mount's Bay. Only cheer up, my lady, take a good heart, and hold yourself prepared; for I am on the watch, and if an opportunity presents itself, and if it can only be got at through a keyhole, it shall become a key to unlock a door to set us free. I have news for you, my lady, great news."

"How! what mean you?"

"Do you see yonder galley, dear lady?"

"I do," said Adela; "I have watched its course for the last hour, as it rode so gracefully over the waters into the bay. What of her?"

"She contains," replied Grace, "so was I told but now in the locutory—she contains a band of King Richard's men-at-arms, all coming to this rock; that is, to the little fortress which stands upon it, and overlooks the dwellings of the poor people and the fishermen who live about the base of Mount St. Michael."

"Well, and what is that to us?" said Adela: "met-at-arms will not be suffered to come near a convent of nuns; and on the summit of the Mount they can do me no more service than if they were in Syria."

"I do not know that," replied Grace. "I, being no novice, only one of the discreet, or what-do-you-call-them sisters, am under no sort of vows. So there can be no harm done to me—no whipping or walling me up alive, if I do steal out of the convent and make an acquaintance with a bold archer or two, who can draw a good bow, and let slip a cloth-yard arrow, for merry England."

"But they could do nothing for us, Grace," said the Lady Adela, "they would feel no sympathy with our distressed state."

"Oh! let me try for that, my dear lady," said Grace; and she added, raising her head and smiling: "I have known the time when a bold archer would have given a helping hand to fetch me out of durance, if I had ever been in it, for the sake of a little innocent kindness, and a good word or so from me. I will not despair even now, though I have got on this black veil and old grey gown, only fit for an Ash-Wednesday, when one does not care what one wears, when one has to lie down on the church pavement may be, and have ashes sprinkled all over one."

"Your hopes, Grace, are wild and vain," said the Lady Adela: "they are the hopes of despair, not of probability."

"I will say no more about them; then, for the present," answered Grace. "Deeds, and not words, should be my motto, if I were a young knight and bore a shield."

"And wherefore do these men-at-arms come hither?" inquired Adela; "hast thou heard?"

"A report is rife in these parts," answered Grace, "though nobody seems to know whence it arose, and it was only told to-day in the locutory, and it flew thence to the kitchen, and there I heard it,—a report is rife that the discontents of some of the Norman barons, enemies to Richard, are daily gaining ground in the West, and that intelligence has been received of a plan in agitation to seize on all the strongholds for Prince John, Earl of Mortaigne, and to make him king instead of his brother Richard. And so, Mount St. Michael not being considered to be strongly enough guarded, the constable of Pendinnis Castle has manned a galley with men-at-arms, and has sent them to reinforce the fortress here, in order that the Mount may be able to hold fast its allegiance to King Richard."

"I am glad of it," said Adela; "and I pray the saints and angels that the royal and brave Richard may preserve his throne unshaken by his most rebellious and unnatural brother. When do these men-at-arms land?"

"You shall hear," said Grace. "To-morrow, being a great day with the pilgrims, the lady abbess fears that the landing of the men-at-arms, before that day is passed, would be attended with much confusion, possibly with disorder; she has therefore sent her own chaplain to the captain of the men-at-arms to pray him to forbear to land his people till after the morrow: meanwhile the vessel is to anchor at Mouse Hole, for by that strange name do they call a place among the rocks opposite the anchorage of the Mount. However, so short a

delay in the landing of the king's men cannot affect us; and, for my own part, I expect so much from their help that I have left off crying ever since I heard of the arrival of the vessel."

"I wish I could hope also," said Adela; "but, alas! when my kinswoman and guardian, the Lady Alicia, condemned me to these walls, she compelled me to leave all hope, with my affections, at Wilsworthy."

"You shall not say so," replied Grace. "I will never believe but that Sir Henry will be as true to you, as, I dare say, Patch is to me, and that all will yet be well with us. I often think of the poor fool, and the goodwill with which he took charge of the letter that he was to instruct Cædmon, the page, to deliver into none but Sir Henry de Pomeroy's own hands. But it never could have reached him, that's certain. Well, we must all part, to be sure, one time or another; and, perhaps, I may find a friend amongst King Richard's archers, if I can but win speech with them, who will be as willing to serve me as was the kind fool. And may be, you, my lady, if it comes to the worst, and you cannot have Sir Henry de Pomeroy, may be, you will find some young knight, who will be just such another, as gallant and as handsome; and, if we can but once steal away from this place ——"

"Do not talk thus, Grace," said the Lady Adela; "I have neither hopes nor plans for myself; my hope is alone in yonder heaven."

"And mine, just now, with Our Lady's leave, on yonder sea," replied Grace. "And do now let us step out on the terrace, and only look at the galley yonder; it will do your heart good to see her streamers, and to hear the voices of her people, as they come up from below, borne on the wind to the top of this old rock. Do come and look at her."

Adela consented, gave her hand, and was led forth by her faithful attendant in good and ill fortune, and from the ancient Gothic terrace which stood near the chapel, at the summit of the Mount, contemplated the ocean and the vessel, which seemed to be "sleeping on her shadow," as the sun declined lower and lower in the horizon, till the glorious orb was at last seen to sink into the bosom of the deep, as all the surrounding scene, earth, sea, and sky, became hushed into repose.

CHAPTER XXVII.

My master is of churlish disposition,
 And little recks to find the way to heaven
 By doing deeds of hospitality.

I charge thee, invite them all: let in the tide
 Of knaves once more; my cook and I'll provide.
 SHAKSPERE.

THE Eve of St. John, from time immemorial, was celebrated at Penzance, and in the hamlets and villages along the shores of Mount's Bay; and though the celebration of that day was introduced into the Christian calendar under the protection of St. John the Baptist, the ceremonies observed upon it are considered by learned antiquaries to be of a much earlier date than the introduction of Christianity into these kingdoms. They are believed to have their origin in British times, and to be nothing less than a vestige of the fires kindled in honour of Belus, or the sun, whose influence is greatest at the summer solstice, and whose godlike power to cheer the earth was duly honoured by the priestesses of the sacred Mount.

The ceremonies to which we allude (not even wholly extinct at the present time) during the twelfth century were at their height, and were at once wild, enthusiastic, and impressive.

Towards the close of day (on the Eve of St. John), it was the custom of the fishermen and the humbler classes to pile immense heaps of wood, and to fix tar-barrels to the tops of long poles, and so to place them at equal distances along the shores of Mount's Bay. At nightfall, these combustibles were set on fire, and became as beacon-lights and bonfires, rendering the whole line of coast a spectacle not unworthy admiration, characterized as it was by a volcanic appearance, as if its hundred fires were bursting from the bosom of the earth. Whilst by the lengthened reflection of their flames upon the

waters of the bay, they became, in a manner so multiplied, that the very ocean seemed to be changed into a sea of lava, glowing like a furnace, fiery red.

This extraordinary spectacle was rendered complete in its character, by the conduct of the men and women who were the principal actors in the scene. The former bearing lighted torches; and the latter, with their hair long and loose, uniting themselves into circles, sang, danced and yelled, as the men, whirling their lighted brands with great velocity aloft, shouted in a manner so wild and frantic, that it has been compared by Gilbert to the fifth day of "the Eleusinian feast, or the day of torches; because, at night, men and women ran about with them, in imitation of Ceres, who having lighted a torch at the fire of Mount *Ætna*, wandered about from place to place, in search of her daughter *Proserpine*."

To prepare for the Eve of St. John, at the time we open this chapter, was the great object of all the villages, towns, and hamlets along Mount's Bay. And many pilgrims and palmers were seen making their way to the holy Mount of St. Michael, at this most celebrated festival of the Baptist.

In the small town of Merazion,* or Market Jew, at the date of our tale, very few houses were inhabited by Christians, and these were principally kept for the accommodation of such pilgrims as bent their steps to the chapel (on the holy Mount) on the great days of the year. Notwithstanding these places of public reception, it sometimes happened they were so full that the late comers had no choice but to remain unhoused, or to take up their temporary quarters under the roof of some despised and unhallowed Israelite. This was so often the case, that at last the Jews of Merazion found the days of St. Michael and the Eve of St. John, festivals of no inconsiderable profit to themselves.

St. Michael's Mount, the place of such universal and penitential resort, was and is, alternately, as the tide flows and

* "Merazion, formerly Market Jew, originated from its early market for tin, chiefly engrossed by the Jews. Here they sold various commodities, purchased tin, and carried on a most lucrative traffic for several centuries, admitting no other people to share in the profit of their concerns."—*Gilbert's History of Cornwall*.

Sir Walter Scott, in his admirable romance of *Ivanhoe*, has painted in so lively a manner the persecution to which the Jews were subjected during the twelfth century, that little need here be said on the subject to the reader. But it is to the honour of Cornwall, that, whilst maltreated, robbed, and murdered by Christians, in almost every other part of the kingdom, the unhappy Jews found a retreat of comparative safety at Market Jew in that county.

ebbs, either an island or a peninsula; being connected with the land at Market Jew (now Merazion) by a large causeway of sands, rocks, and stones, about fifty yards in width, and eight hundred in length.

In calm weather this causeway may be passed (as we who have crossed it on foot can testify) with perfect ease and safety, during the absence of the tide. But when the winds are up, and the sea is rough, the isthmus is completely covered, even at low water, and the rock of St. Michael appears as an island surrounded by a stormy ocean, for many days, and sometimes even weeks together.*

Most of the pilgrims who visited the Mount observed the time of tide, and by crossing the isthmus at low water on foot, reached it in safety when the weather was calm. But many crossed on horses, which they hired for the purpose in Market Jew; and these animals, on their arrival at the Mount, were regularly stabled at a place of accommodation, erected for the purpose near the foot of the rock, as the path was too narrow, precipitous, and craggy to allow any one to ride up to the castle, convent, or chapel, on his steed. We have been thus particular in stating all these minor circumstances at the commencement of our chapter, because every one of them will be found essential to the full development of that most striking enterprise, of which we shall have to speak anon.

Many pilgrims had pressed into Market Jew, as the fishermen and mariners, usually engaged in their craft, were busied in making their preparations for the evening, to celebrate in the wild manner we have already described, the Eve of St. John, the same being on the twenty-third of June.

Hitherto most of the pilgrims of both sexes had come on foot; at length a small band advanced (all men) mounted on horseback, who were seen winding down the side of a gentle hill, towards the town. They were dressed in grey frocks, had their hoods drawn close over their heads, scarcely allowing any part of their faces, except their eyes, to be seen; and from the steadiness, indeed the solemnity of their demeanour, they appeared to be penitents of no ordinary description. It was also remarked that their horses were of the finest and most valuable kind.

On arriving in the town, they could find no lodgment in the houses kept by the Christians for the accommodation of strangers like themselves; all were full. They made many inquiries about the Jews who were the most likely to be able

* "It is now," says a recent observer, "passable only about two-thirds of a day, when the weather is perfectly calm."

to entertain, handsomely, a band of pilgrims and wayfarers, and from the information they received, they made their way without the least hesitation to a house that belonged to a Jew named Sampson, who, with his wife and some of their kindred, there resided, and drove a good trade in the traffic of tin and other matters.

The house of Sampson, the Jew, stood apart from the town; it was situated on the beach, and so close to the rocks, by which it was skirted at the end of the isthmus, or causeway, communicating with the Mount, that the dash and roar of the waves, when they beat with fury upon the shore, were astounding to the inhabitants of a dwelling erected so unusually near the margin of the sea.

The mansion was in other respects well enough; it was large, ancient, and rambling, and had something of a castellated appearance. A terrace, turreted and battlemented, looked out towards the Mount, and was accessible from the house by merely stepping out upon it from a door of one of the principal apartments. A court, guarded by a high wall, and entered by strong gates, was situated on the town side the building, so that on any occasion of apprehension, Sampson could, for a while at least, render his house his castle.

But as all attempts at resistance on the part of the abused children of Israel, were sure at this period to be requited with the most cruel exercise of arbitrary power, the prudent Sampson, unlike his great namesake, never became warlike, except on occasions of immediate danger, or of stern and absolute necessity. At all other times he was a man of peace, having in himself all the usual characteristics of his people, in a season of universal suffering and degradation with their unhappy race.

Sampson had the keen eye for gain, the jealousy of observation, the ever active suspicion, the subtle dealing, and the mean cunning, which, almost without exception, distinguished those outcasts of Judea, who, during the twelfth century, were as wanderers over the face of the whole earth. Nor were the unhappy Jews to be too severely censured for faults that arose from the ferocious prejudices, the inhumanity and injustice of the Christians.

Yet their passiveness, their industry, their prudence and spirit for commercial enterprise, their determined adherence to the prejudices of their nation, with their wonderful command of money, credit, and negotiation, altogether made them so useful to their Christian tyrants, that they were alter-

nately encouraged, tolerated, caressed, or robbed, persecuted, and even murdered, as the predominant interest of those who so used them might prevail.*

Sampson was, in his day, one of the greatest tin merchants and miners of Cornwall; and so useful had he been as a money lender, that certain abbeys (whose superiors were more lavish in their expenditure than nice in the means of supplying it) had received even episcopal censure for contracting loans on a usurious payment of interest with Sampson the Jew. This circumstance, inducing at least a degree of intercourse between the Israelitish money lender and the abbeys, might have rendered Sampson the less reluctant to accommodate a Christian pilgrim or two, in a case of necessity. Be this as it may, he was now called on to do so, by the band of mounted pilgrims we have just named, who purposed merely to rest under the shelter of his roof, till a certain hour in the afternoon, when they intended to cross the isthmus in their visit to the Mount.

Their summons at the portal of Sampson was tardily answered; and, ere the gates were slowly unbarred, a pair of black eyes keenly scrutinized them from a small grating, or peep-hole, at the side of the oaken and nail-headed door. Probably those wary eyes saw nothing to be apprehended in a band of men so peaceable, and bent on a purpose so harmless as that of pilgrimage.

The door was at length opened, and Sampson, the Jew, stood before them. He was lean and gaunt; and a spirit of subtlety, ever watchful for gain, or for suspicion, seemed to lurk in his contracted lids, as the dark eye beneath darted forth keen glances of observation.

He was dressed in a gown of black serge, bound round the middle with an embroidered girdle; his head was bare, for he hated to place on it the yellow cap which, by law, the Jews of this period were compelled to adopt, as a mark of their disgrace.

His leanness, a sternness of countenance, which not even his lowliness of manner could wholly overcome, and his hollow-set eyes, altogether presented a face that had in it something wildly characteristic. In moments of less interest,

* Hollinshed mentions the dreadful manner in which some thousand Jews in England were robbed and murdered by certain knights, previously to their expedition to the Holy Land, in the twelfth century. There is every cause to believe the Jews of Market Jew, Cornwall, escaped these injuries at the period just named.

those who had now gained admission at his house would have looked upon such a man as Sampson with no common degree of curiosity; but as it was, they were too much bent on their own purposes to heed him.

The pilgrim who acted as spokesman for the rest, appeared to be the leader of the party. He requested that they might all be accommodated with house-room and refreshment, and that he and one of his companions might be conducted into an apartment by themselves. As he spoke, the leader threw somewhat back his hood, and the Jew gave him a look of yet nicer scrutiny, but withdrew his eyes, and fixed them on the ground the instant he saw that he was observed.

All was done as had been requested; and the principal pilgrim, with his chosen companion, were conducted into a large old chamber that opened on the terrace fronting the Mount. They stepped out upon it as soon as they entered, and looking towards the rock, commenced an earnest conversation, with which at present we have no concern; but we must now attend Sampson the Jew, and see how he took the arrival of these pilgrim claimants on his hospitality. He seemed not to like them; but he was too much governed by fear to express his disapprobation to any but his wife.

After having seen them all accommodated, he sought his spouse Miriam in her own apartment. She was somewhat advanced in life, yet not very old; she had a noble person, and appeared to be an Israelite of a better order than her husband. She was rather richly attired in velvet of Genoa, and her head was covered by a long veil that hung down her back and nearly touched the floor. The richest border, composed of the most brilliant feathers of foreign birds, ornamented her kirtle, and a long tippet of the same was thrown across her shoulders. A couple of very small steel mirrors were fastened in her sleeves, like brooches, to confine their fulness, a fashion with the Jewish women of her day, that was derived from the highest antiquity. She was busied in preparing, with much care, a decoction from some herbs that lay in a basket.

"Miriam," said her husband, addressing her as he entered; "Miriam—but on this day I should rather call thee Mara, for the God of Israel hath, I fear, dealt very bitterly with us. He hath brought spies upon us; they are even now under our roof."

"Spies!" exclaimed Miriam; "spies! surely not, my husband. I saw but a band of harmless Christians, who come

here to worship the angel Michael in yonder Mount, forgetful of the great law, thou shalt worship none but the Lord thy God. Spies I trust they are not. It is thy fear, husband, that makes them seem such to thee."

"It is not so," replied Sampson; "Holy Abraham, I would it were no other! Yet, Miriam, the mischief that I fear is not to us; my fear is for one now under our roof, to whom thou and I, Miriam, in years long since past, owe the saving of both our lives, and that great recompense beside which she made to thee for the service thou didst her in Normandy; the service, I mean, about the Christian infant, the female child."

"You speak of the Lady Alicia de Beaumont," said Miriam, "who came last night to our dwelling, weary and worn with her long pilgrimage and her many sorrows. She hath good reason, indeed, that the world should not know that she sojourns in the house of Sampson the Jew, and his wife Miriam. I have placed the noble Nazarene lady in a chamber above, by herself, where no one but myself and the damsel Orpha can resort to her. No one who comes hither can disturb her repose or intrude upon her sorrows. Whatever may be her sins to her own people, the lady has been a good lady to us, and we owe to her all we possess."

"Yea, under favour of the God of Abraham," said Sampson. "By touching the heart of a cruel enemy, so that it softened at the last; like the heart of Pharaoh when he let the children of Israel go, even so did the Baron de Marmoutier at length let us go, after he had held us in the bondage of the dungeons in his castle in Normandy, and our lives were as nothing worth. To the Lady Alicia do we owe, under God, the very breath of our nostrils; for she it was who interceded for us with her brother, the gloomy Norman, till he, at her instance, forgave our supposed offence, and bade us go in peace. I have not, and will not, forget this act of mercy in the Christian lady. Where is she now?"

"She sleeps," said Miriam; "last night she did not rest well. She will tarry here for a few days, till she has visited the unhappy Lady Adela, the child whom I nursed at my own bosom, when my sweet infant Ruth died; when the natural mother of the Lady Adela dared not to acknowledge her own offspring, but was compelled to put away her child, even as were the Hebrew women, when they suffered under the hard bondage of the Egyptians."

"Ay," said Sampson; "thou didst a noble service to the Lady Alicia; and thou wast the means of preserving the

Christian infant, which must otherwise have been laid down to die, for want of nurture, even as was Ishmael in the desert wilderness."

"And nobly did the Lady Alicia requite that service," said Miriam; "for without her powerful aid, we had never found the means to pass over into England, or to commence the world again, and to be what we now are."

"And to keep what we now have," said Sampson, "we must be wary. The Lady Alicia hath instructed us both in certain matters that we will not name, lest the very stones should find a listening ear. You know my meaning. What would she say then, did she know that one is here, here in this very house, whom she would least desire to see in the neighbourhood of yonder Mount?"

"Of whom speak you!" inquired Miriam.

"Hark in thine ear, for I will not utter his name above my breath—" Sampson stooped, whispered; Miriam started.

"Holy Father Abraham," she said, "this is an unlooked for evil! But I will be on the watch: the lady and he shall not meet. She shall not know of his presence: that is, not know of it, unless one thing should happen,—and then"—

"It must not be," said Sampson. "If this thing is noised abroad, it may bring the power of the county upon my house. My goods and my monies may be forfeited, and we may both again suffer durance."

"The strait is a narrow one," said Miriam; "but fear not, husband, we will be cautious; and we are too much accustomed to danger and sudden perils to be startled by them now."

"Do you then, Miriam, look to the lady," said Sampson, "and I will keep watch over these pilgrims till they depart; that will be in a few hours. I will, also, keep an eye to the pelf; for hast thou not heard, that there are King Richard's men-at-arms coming to yonder Mount? and such, we know, ever persecute and grievously harass the poor remnant of Israel. They have a keen eye to the pelf; but I will take measures trebly to secure that which is mine, by the hard service of the brain and hand. They shall be kept aloof from my doors, with the blessing of our father."

"Thou art right, husband," said Miriam: "they are cruel men of war, those people of King Richard; they are like the infidels of old, and the Ammonite and the Moabite were not, we know, permitted to come into the congregation of God for ever."

"Ay," said Sampson, "because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them. Howbeit the God of our fathers turned the curse into a blessing; and even so will I do by this people. These men-at-arms shall not come within my gates for fellowship; but I say not that I will close my heart against them for thrift or traffic. Seeing that I deal in the rich armours of Milan, the stuffs of Genoa, and the tins of Cornwall; they may need some, and for such purposes I must not deny myself to them. Wealth honestly gained hath upon it the blessing of increase."

"Sevenfold hath been thine, husband," said Miriam.

"And I will watch to keep it mine with eye, and hand, and wit," said the Jew; and proceeding to unlock a large chest that was in the room, he took from it several bags of weight, rich caskets, and other valuables; and then, touching a secret spring in the wall, a panel slipped aside, and disclosed a hollow large enough to be capable on any emergency of hiding away not only goods, but whosoever might wish for temporary concealment during a search.

Here Sampson proceeded to deposit several of his valuables, and, as he did so, he muttered, more as if thinking aloud than talking to Miriam, a sort of philosophical comment on himself and his riches, pausing and resuming the train of his thinking, as his occupation and the interest he took in it would admit. Miriam watched his movements with an interest not less lively than his own; but, as she knew well his humour, and that he liked not to be interfered with in such moments, she did not offer to assist him.

"Five hundred byzants," he said, "in virgin gold, and unclipt in the rim. In this bag a great load, a heavy but still a good load—the interest of the monies lent to the spendthrift Earl of Mortaigne. It is well I got payment; no thanks to the Earl, however, but to his steward of the household. Yet he gave me scorn with the monies, and called it usury. No matter if it were usury; it is but justice to have somewhat to recompense the scorner's insolent taunts."

"Those who borrow of you, husband," said Miriam, "I fear will ever scorn you, since most who do so are spendthrifts, and such are ever worthless, and therefore are they railers."

"Oh! blame them not, my good Miriam," said Sampson, with a sneer, "profuseness is ever the mother of poverty; she spreads her sail, broad and full, for the rocks of destruction; and we, the thrifty sons of Israel, gather up great store from her wrecks."

"And yet," said Miriam, "there are moments when I doubt if such store be really a blessing. Thy unquiet nights, robbed of their golden slumbers—thy mind tossed like a troubled ocean that never is at rest—thy constant inquietude and vigilant fears, make gold a curse to thee."

"But I will never curse it," said Sampson. "I will hail it, as the children of the earth do the sun, when it rises before them, bringing blessing and fertility in its beams. Gold!—wealth, hard earned and dearly bought,—it is a real thing. Gold!—it is no vision of the dreamer's brain. It may be handled, felt, and stored. Therefore, lie there," said Sampson, raising another bag and depositing it in his secret hoard; "lie there, thou mighty engine, thou potent friend, which can bestow on man all that makes sweet his days and fills his cup with joy."

"Alas! not always, husband," said Miriam.

"Yes, always," replied Sampson. "Wouldst thou have power?—wealth can buy it. Wouldst thou have place?—the judge's robe is often won and worn by potent gold. Wouldst thou win favour with the great?—honour?—beauty? The first is publicly put to sale; the Norman most especially sells it, as he would a hawk or a hound. Honour! buy merit with thy bags, pay the full sum, and none will question it. Beauty! would man win beauty?—these sparkling diamonds and these orient pearls,"—he opened, for a moment, a rich casket, as he spoke,— "these would buy a princess to a Jew's embrace;—ay, a Christian princess, but not such a partner as thou art, Miriam; for thou art as a crown of honour to thy husband."

"I have done but my duty to thee, Sampson," said Miriam, "as it became a daughter of our nation to do unto her husband, in weal and woe."

"Oh! the fountain of my life hath been blessed for thy sake, dear Miriam," said the Jew. "I have rejoiced over thee, as the wife of my youth, the companion of my riper years, the solace of my age; and thou art to me as the loving hind, or as the pleasant roe. May the dew of heaven fall with blessing on thy head, for thou art very faithful; else would I not trust thee, though thou art my wife, with the knowledge of this my secret store."

"It is pleasant to thee to look upon it," said Miriam; "but to me it is not so."

"It is only less dear to me than thyself," said Sampson, "for I have toiled hard to gain it, and men love that which is won with difficulty and danger. Here are more treasures than

is even known to thee. Here lie bonds that are as the very lifeblood of spendthrift heirs, their whole substance put out to pledge to the despised Jew! Here are the very souls of misers—parchments lacking payment for redemption; and here is the hope of many a fool, who has given in stake his good lands in England, that he may have gold to equip him and his followers, to regain an empty tomb in that holy city where once the anointed kings of Israel held the sceptre of Jerusalem, till Jehovah, in his fierce wrath, bade that city and her princes, for her pride and oppression, to come down and sit in the dust."

"Alas, for Zion!" said Miriam: "When I think on thee, my very heart bleeds for the desolation of Israel, and I could, even as did her children in captivity in a strange land, take up my song of mourning, and find no joy in my people, whilst away from that pleasant home."

Sampson sighed deeply, but did not answer; he then made fast his secret store, pressed Miriam fondly to his bosom, and left her to attend on the Lady Alicia, whilst he went to look after his pilgrim guests, with a watchful and jealous spirit.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we'll not fail.
Now sits expectation in the air,
And hides a sword, from hilt unto the point,
With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets
Promised to Harry and his followers.

SHAKESPEARE.

At the proper hour for crossing the isthmus, the band of pilgrims, with hoods drawn close over their heads, quitted the house of Sampson the Jew. The leader of that band and his chosen companion went a little forward before the rest; all were mounted.

The two foremost rode slowly, side by side, over the rocks. There was a pause in their discourse; till, at length, the elder broke silence, and thus addressed the younger with the most resolute air as he spoke:—

“What we do, we must do suddenly. I know the enterprise is desperate; so is the occasion for it. The men-at-arms in yonder galley will land on the morrow; and then it would be mere madness to make our attempt. Our followers are so few. As it is, we may hope to surprise the men who now do watch and ward with success. We may hope to render ourselves masters of the fortress, of all the place, in the name of the Earl of Mortaigne; and for him will we faithfully hold it, for it is a strong place; I will not doubt of our success. Art thou well armed, Cædmon?”

“I am,” replied the Saxon youth; “so are all your followers, Sir Henry. Beneath their pilgrims’ gowns and cloaks, they, to a man, wear a shirt of linked mail, and carry both axe, dagger, and sword.”

“It is well,” replied De Pomeroy, “on the lives of our followers depends the success of our enterprise; for we are, in comparison with the numbers who guard yonder rock, but

as a handful of men. Thanks, however, to the whimsical old abbess, for one hope in our enterprise; since she it is, I have learnt, who will not suffer the reinforcement of our enemies to land on this holy Mount till after the Eve of St. John. Ere that eve be spent, we shall, I trust, have captured this stronghold for the Earl of Mortaigne."

"Yet not for the Earl of Mortaigne, noble Sir Henry,—not for the sake of that rebellious prince, rebellious to his lion-hearted brother, would I have joined your expedition," said Cædmon. "It is my sense of the gratitude that I owe to you, who never ceased to watch over me, when I lay sick and wounded nearly to death. It is to regain for you, Sir Henry, the lovely Lady Adela, imprisoned in yonder cells,—it is for this purpose only, that Cædmon now rides forth with you on an expedition which he deems to be desperate. Yet does he rejoice that in thus devoting himself to your service in this hour of danger, he can prove that the heart of the Saxon boy can be grateful: were it otherwise, it is not for Prince John, nor for his cause, that I would draw a sword."

"I care not for whom you draw it, dear Cædmon, so that you this day strike a good blow with it, by my side. True it is, you may combat for me and the Lady Adela alone; since to gain possession of the Mount is the only means left me, to set at liberty the Lady Adela; of whose captivity here, I was in utter ignorance, till her own letter, intrusted to your hands, was found in the bosom of your tunic, and made known to me the fact, whilst you were yet insensible, after the wounds you had received in the fight, that we now call the battle of Black Shields. I instantly arranged the enterprise we are about, on this the first opportunity, to execute. There is another circumstance also, by which I am, in honour, pledged to appear on this day at the chapel in yonder Mount."

Cædmon expressed his surprise at the hearing of this, and inquired if he might learn the cause.

"You shall know all that I am at liberty to impart," said Sir Henry. "There was, in times past, a quarrel, in the Holy Land, between a certain English baron and my father, the Lord of Berry Pomeroy. My father gave his silver spur, an antique token, an heir-loom of honour in our house, derived from the hand of Charles Martel, that he would prove his honour was untarnished,—that the accusation was false; or, if he failed to do so, would forfeit his honour's pawn. He met his adversary with gallantry and spirit; but, alas! died in the encounter. But I have always heard,—for I was a child when

all this happened,—that my father persisted in his declaration to the last, that he was the injured man. Now on this day, by a strange accident, the circumstances of which are too long to be here narrated, I have promised to meet, in the chapel of yonder Mount, a certain palmer, who, I know not how, is in the possession of the spur that was so pledged and lost by my father; and who has said that if I would give him this meeting, he would point out to me a way to redeem it with honour to myself."

"And to do so," said Cædmon, "must be with you a thing of more import, than even to regain the Lady Adela; for without honour, neither life nor the love of that fair lady would have power to charm."

"Thou hast a noble spirit, Cædmon," said Sir Henry: "for thy sake I could lament the severity of that law of the Norman William which deprived the ancient Saxon thanes of their privilege of gentle birth, and made their lands and castles forfeited. Thou wouldst have ennobled thy rank, and not thy rank thee; for even now, in the midst of poverty and dependence, there is that in thee which makes me often feel the thrill of surprise and admiration at the magnanimity of thy mind. Generous youth! thou mayst yet be spared for noble things; I will not put thy life to the hazard to which it must be exposed in such an enterprise as this; and that, too, at a moment when we hope to gain the Mount for the Earl of Mortaigne;—to do so is scarcely a secondary motive in this adventure. Go then: return in safety to yonder town, and there await, at the Jew's, the issue of this desperate enterprise: it will soon be known to thee."

"Never!" exclaimed Cædmon, "never will I, in a moment of such peril, desert the friend who watched over my life, when I was houseless, friendless—watched over me with a generosity I can never requite. On then, Sir Henry, for my mind is fixed: I will live or die in the service of De Pomeroy."

"Forward then," said Sir Henry; and stopping awhile, and turning to his band, he added, "Now, my brave followers, we are near the rock. Silence now becomes essential to the success of uor attempt. My people, to a man, know what to do."

So saying, they passed rapidly over the remainder of the way that lay between them and the rock. They speedily dismounted, gave their horses in charge to one of their band, who undertook to keep them in readiness at the foot of the Mount (in case any failure should render retreat necessary),

as the rest prepared to begin the ascent. For some time they pursued it in profound silence; till at length the narrow and crooked path led to the outer portal of the buildings, where a guard was stationed both by day and night. In the course of the ascent, they had to pass a very small and ancient watch-tower which stood on the extreme verge of a projecting portion of the rock, and overlooked the whole of Mount's Bay.

Before this tower Sir Henry paused for a few minutes, and held a brief conference with Cædmon. Should he at once advance and render himself master of the watch, or should he pass on, in the hope to reach the summit unsuspected? Hitherto not the slightest opposition had been offered to him, or his pilgrim band. Might he not now, therefore, by attempting the watch, unnecessarily cause a sudden alarm, that would bring down the whole strength of the little fortress upon him, before he stood within its walls?—when, did he now continue quietly his course, it was not only possible, but highly probable, he would achieve his object without interruption; and might accomplish all he had in view without spilling one drop of human blood; for though living in an age when, “in the trade of war, to slay men” was held as a thing of course, and of little moment, Sir Henry de Pomeroy had a natural reluctance to shed blood, unless it were in a case of absolute necessity. Hence was it, though he had won great fame in battle, that he had gained none in the gentle exercise of the tournament, where valiant knights often killed each other in pure love, and for the sake of honour and renown.

This deliberation ended in the resolution to make at once for the great portal, ere himself or his followers drew a sword in their attempt. They passed, therefore, the little watch-tower we have named, in profound silence: if doing so might really be prudent or not, will be seen in the sequel.

They gained the second ward by a similar winding-path cut in the ascent amid the rocks, forming in parts a hollow way between them. They passed this second ward unsuspected, as before: many saw them, but no notice was taken, as there was nothing more common than to see pilgrims and palmers on the Eve of St. John, ascending to make their prayers and offerings in the chapel.

At length the party so disguised, mounted the last and steepest ascent that brought them to the summit of the rock. They stood on a small level towards the north-west, whence a flight of steps led to the chief portal of the buildings: ere they approached it, they spoke in whispers to each other.

Each man loosed his pilgrim's belt and passed his hand under his cloak, so that he might in an instant draw his sword; and, two and two, once more, and in profound silence, did they proceed, mount the steps, and stand before the great portal that opened into the hall of entrance which communicated by passages and galleries with the convent of nuns. There a guard was stationed, as a portion of the buildings clustered at the summit was of a warlike character, and had been especially erected for the safety of the Mount, to protect it as much from sea pirates as from any other foes.

The door readily opened to admit the supposed pilgrims; all passed over the threshold. But no sooner had the door closed than De Pomeroy gave the signal; and in an instant his band disencumbered themselves of their long cloaks, drew their weapons, and rushing on the guard, overpowered them almost before they were aware of danger; so sudden, so determined was the action: its very daring rendered it successful. The guard disarmed, the assailants next took from them all means of resistance, secured the portal, and made themselves masters of the keys, promising not to injure a hair of the heads of the vanquished, provided they remained quiet; but threatening them with instant death, did they but raise a cry, or move a finger in opposition to their purpose.

Thankful that their lives were thus spared, when they were so completely at the mercy of their enemies, the guard yielded themselves prisoners without a word, gladly accepting the offered terms. The prisoners were bound with the leathern girdles of their vanquishers, and two or three of the band remained to watch over them and keep the gates. Sir Henry de Pomeroy then selected one from among them, and offered him a large reward, would he act as a guide through the intricacies of the building: his object being to proceed at once to the deliverance of the Lady Adela. We must not omit stating that Cædmon was one of those left in charge of the prisoners and the gates.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy speedily found himself within the convent part of the buildings, and in the very cell to which he forced an entrance, he discovered his beloved Adela, nearly fainting with apprehension from alarm, and the violence with which the door of her cell had been burst open by armed men.

CHAPTER XXIX.

And in thy face strange motions doth appear—
Such as we see when men restrain their breath
On some great sudden haste; oh! what portents
Are these?

SHAKSPEARE.

To snatch her to his bosom—to reassure her by the most earnest and affectionate protestations that he was there for her deliverance—that she was his own, his beloved Adela—that he would henceforth resign her but with life—that, ere he quitted the house, it was his purpose to secure her his for ever, by seeking out the priest of the convent, and compelling him on the instant to perform the marriage rite at the altar of the chapel—that immediately after he would place her in such safety that all attempts to part him from his bride should be vain—to give and repeat to her these and similar assurances,—was the work but of a few minutes. For so deliberate had been Sir Henry's plans, so fully had every possibility been anticipated, that the very cloak in which he designed to wrap Adela, to conceal her person, should he be enabled on that evening to remove her from the Mount, was rolled up and fastened to his girdle.

He saw her alarm; once more did he entreat her to take courage, to calm her agitated spirits; and, as she would save herself from becoming a victim to forced vows and perpetual captivity, as she would save him from the despair which the loss of her must inevitably occasion, that she would compose her mind, call up her resolution, and on the instant accompany him to the altar. He had already despatched some of his faithful band, who had devoted themselves to his service in carrying forward his enterprise, to find out the priest, who by this time must be awaiting them in the chapel.

Wondering, fearing, scarcely comprehending (in the confusion of mind into which she had been thrown by the suddenness of the transaction) the nature or extent of her

deliverance; seeming but to be fully sensible that she was about on the instant to pass from the captivity of a cell to that of being bound in bonds of the holiest affection to the man she most loved, the agitated Adela gave him, almost in silence, her trembling hand. It was not without a shock, for which he could scarcely account to his own mind, that as Sir Henry seized it, and would have pressed it to his lips, he felt it was cold and clammy. The idea that such a hand was more like that of a corpse than of a living bride, threw a chill over his feelings; yet it was but a momentary shock, and he speedily shook it off, as a superstitious feeling unworthy a man.

Sir Henry now drew Adela forth from her cell; his band awaited him in the gallery that led to it. They had surprised the priest in his way to the chapel. With fearful threatenings, should he refuse compliance, had they explained to him the nature of the service he was required to fulfil—their leader had determined to espouse the Lady Adela on the instant, she being his betrothed, who had been brought by his enemies to that convent against her will, with the intent to compel her by forced vows never more to quit its walls.

It is almost needless to add, that arguments such as these, made by armed men who seemed prepared for any violence, were not very likely to meet with opposition from a poor old priest, nearly fourscore years of age. He promised compliance, begged those who seized upon him to use no further violence, and not unnecessarily alarm the sisters, who were the timid and harmless inmates of the house. For so sudden had been this surprise, so skilfully arranged, and so resolutely conducted, that all we have related had actually taken place before the alarm had extended to the chapel, where a particular service, at which the aged priest was about to assist, was going on at the time.

As Adela, leaning on the arm of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, passed towards the chapel, anything but joy filled her mind. She had loved him more than life, she had feared his loss more than death; yet, strange to tell, and she could not account for it, she felt an indescribable reluctance to thus suddenly becoming his wife. She felt at this moment as if she should be glad not to become such at all—as if the utmost happiness her affection could desire would consist in the delight she took in his presence, to share his converse, to watch over his welfare, and to do him faithful service. Yet, though she felt all this, she dared not give utterance to such feelings when she thought of the engagement between them

that had been so violently broken, without any reason being assigned for it, by the severity of her guardian; she felt she should be ungenerous to her deliverer did she now refuse to receive his vows, as he so earnestly desired, at the altar.

From what motive then could arise her reluctance? for she was not capricious. A strange and undefined feeling, which she could not but consider as a presentiment of sorrow, of sorrow on their union, filled her heart, and a secret foreboding of evil, not distant, but at hand, took such strong hold of her mind, that she stepped forward to the nuptial rite with the down-cast and saddened eye, and the heavy step of one who advances to a funeral.

What is presentiment? May it not be nothing more than what an able writer on the operation of the human mind terms "a nice calculation made by the feelings, before we permit it to become an operation of the judgment." Be this as it may, such was the state of the gentle Adela's mind, as she passed under the low doorway which led from the interior of the convent into the chapel.

It was an ancient Saxon building, that had been erected by Edward the Confessor; the columns were of the plain but massive kind, so common with the ecclesiastical edifices of that early date. The richest carved oak stalls stood on every side, and the Rood, or Crucifixion, also of carved oak, was raised on the top of a highly-ornamented rood-loft, or screen, that crossed the church, of a far more recent date than the original building. The image of St. Michael was placed on the altar, in the front of which stood a cross. The windows were high in the walls; they were round-headed and narrow, ornamented by the zigzag moulding, and filled with the deepest stained glass, so that the light of the chapel was dull and melancholy; it was never visited by the bright beams of a cheerful day.

As Adela and Sir Henry entered, they heard the sounds of the organ, and in a sweet and slow strain, there arose from the choir of nuns, who were unseen (being seated behind a large black curtain, which concealed them), a solemn chant. Adela shuddered—stopped—laid her hand on the arm of Sir Henry, and whispered to him, in an accent of deep emotion, "It is a requiem!"

Immediately after, from a soft and melancholy cadence, the requiem rose into a full chorus of majestic sounds. The colour fled from the cheeks of Adela, who became ashy white, as she clasped her hands, looked imploringly on Sir Henry, and said,—

"Oh! do not disturb the service for the dead. Peace be to the departed! The nuptial rite should not be ushered in by the song of death. Let us go hence; this is no time to think of marriage vows."

"But mine are pledged to heaven," replied Sir Henry, with an energy that had in it something of frantic wildness, "mine are pledged that I will never depart this house till I bear you from it, Adela, as my bride, or am myself borne from it a corpse. Do you choose. It is in your power to make this as a requiem for him who loves you more than life, and who would gladly lose it for your sake."

Deeply affected by his words, even alarmed by the wildness of his looks and the desperate state of mind which his demeanour, his temerity at this hour, did but too plainly express, Adela forbore to say another word, and passively suffering him to do what he pleased, he led her forward to the altar.

With a determination, an energy, quite in character with what we have already related, supported by his band, who stood with their drawn weapons around him, to the surprise, the consternation of all present, and to the horror of the religious part of the assembly, who looked upon the whole scene as little better than sacrilegious, did Sir Henry de Pomeroy declare that he now took possession of Mount St. Michael, in the name of John, Earl of Mortaigne, whom he acknowledged as his liege lord, and that, in his absence, he, Henry, Baron of Berry Pomeroy Castle, stood there as its master and as constable of the Mount. That he would injure no one, disturb no one; that life and property should be safe to all who surrendered themselves to Prince John, and would join with him to maintain the Mount in the prince's name. That the Lady Adela was his betrothed, that she had been torn from him by force, and that he was determined to espouse her, at that very hour and in that very chapel, not doubting the pardon of Rome, which he intended to solicit, for taking a novice from her cell. Finally, he commanded all present, save his own people and the priest, to depart the chapel, and telling them that he was in possession of the keys, added that, not till the morrow, when the Mount would be fully armed and secured, by a reinforcement which he expected that night from the friends of Prince John, could he consent to open the gates, so that any one should pass without the convent walls.

No sooner had Sir Henry de Pomeroy ended this address, than he found himself obeyed without the least opposition;

for so daring had been the whole action that it seemed to have a paralysing effect on the minds of all who were within the convent on that memorable day.

The daring Sir Henry, the agitated Adela, and the affrighted priest, now remained; De Pomeroy, still supported by his armed band, who forthwith surrounded the altar. The priest ascended the steps, knelt before the cross, arose, opened the book, and turned towards the youthful pair about to be united under such extraordinary circumstances.

At this crisis, a figure glided from behind one of the massive old columns that stood near the entrance at the west end of the chapel. His form was large, his height commanding; he was wrapped in a gown and mantle that he seemed to keep close to hide as much as possible his person; his arms were folded on his breast; his cowl, for he wore one, was thrown back, so as to shew his face, but not to leave bare his head. He stalked forward with the air of one who comes in the consciousness of power to enforce his will. Silence was on his lips, but it needed but a glance of the eye to tell Sir Henry that he now beheld the Palmer.

He stopped within a few paces of the altar, and with a look so stern, yet so commanding (that, combined with the fearless demeanour he had displayed at such a time and in such a place, there was in it something awful), glanced indignantly at Sir Henry, as he exclaimed—

“Forbear, young sir, forbear!” and stretching forth his hand, seized that of Adela, and tore it from Sir Henry’s grasp.

Incensed at the action, the fiery young man laid his hand on his dagger, and drew some paces back, trembling with passion; yet, as if suddenly recollecting himself, forbore to draw it in such a place; but exclaimed—

“Who dares bid me forbear, when I stand here to wed my affianced bride?”

“I say to thee, forbear,” exclaimed the Palmer, in a voice that made the chapel ring again with its strange and impatient sounds. Adela trembled, and felt its tones thrill to her secret soul.

“And who are you who thus interpose yourself between me and mine?” said Sir Henry. “Well do I remember that this is the second time you have wrought on my mind with fearful effect. But I will not be trifled with. You shall answer for this interruption; you —”

“I will answer for it, and now,” said the Palmer. “If

you are a knight, if you are a man, as you value honour, as you would save your good name from becoming a word to denote shame, the very scorn of men, I forbid you to wed this lady; by the laws of chivalry I forbid it,—till you have fulfilled your promise so solemnly given to me, that on the Eve of St. John you would attend me; you would redeem your father's token, lost with his honour and his life; or that failing to do this, you would admit as true, that the pledge was justly forfeited. To this are you sworn by the word of a true knight, for this is the Eve of St. John, and I am here to demand a fulfilment of your promise."

"I will not shrink from it," replied Sir Henry. "You have spoken but the truth; and by the laws of chivalry, I may not indeed wed till I have redeemed a pledge so solemnly given. Give me then to know my opponent, for he must act with your knowledge; I do not fear his encounter."

"Know him then in me," said the Palmer.

"In you!" exclaimed Sir Henry; "you are under vows of penitence and discipline—impossible! you wear but a palmer's gown; yours is no champion's coat."

"Look then on this," said the Palmer, drawing aside the gown in which he had been so carefully muffled, so as to shew beneath it the glittering rings of a coat of chain mail. "Think you," he added, in somewhat a scornful manner, "that your band alone can wear a pilgrim's frock, to hide a coat of steel? I am, even as yourself, Sir Henry, a sworn knight. On this, the Eve of St. John, my vow of discipline expires. To-morrow I am a free man. To-morrow I will meet you; and will then give you such reasons for the interruption of this night's ceremony, as shall fully satisfy your utmost doubt,—and if not, our swords must answer it. Remember your plighted word,—you may not quit this Mount till our conference is ended, till the token of a father's lost honour be acknowledged or redeemed."

At this moment there was a movement without the chapel; in the next Sir Henry beheld the faithful Cædmon, who rushed in pale and breathless with alarm.

"Oh! my dear lord," he exclaimed, as he cast a look of affectionate concern on Adela, "you must on the instant fly the Mount, or perish. We are discovered; not one of your band but will be put to the sword. Fly! there is no safety but in flight."

"Discovered!" said the Lady Adela; "Oh! Sir Henry, save yourself. Be not alarmed for me; save yourself, and I

shall be safe. I fear no danger; I am prepared to meet the worst."

"Are we betrayed?—how discovered?—what mean you?" said Sir Henry.

"I can scarcely satisfy you," replied Cædmon: "all I know is this, that the abbess has contrived to give some intimation of what has happened, by means of an underground passage from the convent to the watch-tower that we passed in our ascent; and a signal has been made to the galley with King Richard's men-at-arms: they are making for the shore; in less than an hour will they be landed, and will be masters of us, and of the Mount; for few indeed are we in number."

"How know you this is true?" said Sir Henry.

"One of our people, who passed forth to gain intelligence, soon learnt the truth; our fears being first awakened by observing, from one of the windows of the hall, the signals of the watch-tower, and the galley on the stir towards the shore. No efforts on our part can now avail; we must be overpowered by numbers; flight, immediate flight can alone save you, and all. Our horses await us at the base of the Mount; we may yet cross, ere the tide be risen so as to render crossing impossible. But if there is delay, the sea, no less than the land, will be our enemy."

Sir Henry de Pomeroy refused to hear more; but even the palmer seemed shocked at this prospect of a danger so unavoidable to that daring friend of the rebel John. He conjured him not rashly to throw away his life; but to give orders that his followers should abandon the Mount, as it was impossible they could maintain it without the help of a reinforcement, that would now come too late. Adela, anxious for his safety, implored him not to linger to meet certain death—a death that would consign them both to one grave.

This last remonstrance had the desired effect, and Sir Henry gave over the first rash thoughts of his heart, to stay and fall on the spot, rather than abandon the advantage he had gained for the Earl of Mortaigne. But now he turned to the weeping Adela, and declaring that he would never consent to part from her more, and that in moments of danger and of death, she was as dear to him as in those of life and joy, he hurried her from the chapel, threw the cloak he had brought with him for the purpose over her shoulders, and followed by his band of men-at-arms, and by the palmer, who declared he would not leave him till the object of their meeting should be fulfilled, hastened to reach the base of the rock ere it would be

too late to cross the isthmus. Cædmon had gone forward, so that their horses were in readiness; they reached them without interruption, for their retreat had been as sudden as their victory. The whole enterprise was, indeed, one of so much daring and of so extraordinary a nature, that, were not such acts common at the period, it would seem but as a fiction of the wildest and most romantic description.

CHAPTER XXX.

The strife of fiends is on the battling clouds,
The glare of hell is in these sulphurous lightnings;
This is no earthly storm.

Of winds and waves, the strangely mingling sounds,
Ride heavily the night-wind's hollow sweep,
Mocking the sounds of human lamentation.
MATURIN'S *Bertram*,

THE isthmus, which, when left by the tide, admitted, either on foot or on horseback, a communication between the Mount and the mainland, was, when the waters returned, covered by two currents that swept round the rock and met beyond it, from opposite directions. Sometimes, at spring tides, or on sudden squalls, the causeway became impassable before the usual hour, and in stormy weather, or on any sudden or heavy swell of the sea, it was by no means an uncommon circumstance for the Mount to be very quickly surrounded by water, and to remain as an island during many days.

To those who lived on it, or in the neighbourhood of the bay, these things were so well known that they were always prepared for them, and never attempted to cross when there was the least sign of danger. But to strangers it would often have been hazardous, even at the regular periods, did not almost every person who visited the Mount learn from some one on the spot the state of the tide, and how it was likely to be affected by the weather, before he ventured upon crossing. We have here mentioned these particulars, as a knowledge of them will be found essential to what it now becomes our task to relate in this narrative.

It was between the hours of six and seven on that Eve of St. John of which we have already spoken, when (a circumstance not at all unfrequent on the western coast) a very

considerable change, that had been gradually coming on during the fore part of the day, took place in the weather. It blew a hard gale, and every sign in earth, sea, or sky, threatened a night that would be one of tempest; indeed, so much so, that many of the fishermen abandoned the preparations they were making for their wild sports, with their fires, and went down to the shore to secure their nets and boats. Such as dwelt on the beach cleared their cottages of the little furniture they might chance to possess in their lower stories; for, it being a spring-tide, in addition to the coming storm, they doubted not the overflowing of the waters would completely inundate the ground floors of their humble dwellings.

The Lady Alicia, who was at the house of Sampson the Jew, had arisen from her couch, and was now pacing her chamber in great distress of mind; for Miriam, who really loved her, and to whom she had been a most generous friend, having less in her disposition of cold caution than her husband, had communicated to the lady, Sampson's secret; viz. that he had detected Sir Henry de Pomeroy as the leader of the band of pilgrims who had so lately passed over to the Mount.

Though the Lady Alicia could not possibly guess that the deliverance of Adela was one (though not the chief) motive for Sir Henry's visit to St. Michael's, yet the mere fact of his being there was quite enough to render her uneasy, and she purposed to lose no time in warning the lady abbess to be on her guard, lest Sir Henry should attempt, by any violent means, to remove her charge from her cell. But, unable to cross on account of the rising gale, she had been obliged to defer her intended visit till the next day.

In the interval she sought Sampson and his wife in the apartment which opened on the terrace, and commanded a full view of the Mount and the bay.

The evening became every minute more and more dismal; the heavens seemed to hang heavily in middle air, as if about to descend in clouds and gloom upon the waters; and as this mass of vapours occasionally opened, they disclosed the sun's disk, of a dull red hue, on the breast of the ocean, giving a character of sombre sublimity to the extent of sea over which it flung its departing beams, as if to render but the more distinctly visible the angry and threatening billows that came rolling in with tumultuous succession towards the shore. The winds rose no less than the waves, and with sounds so loud and dismal, that, combined with the roaring of the waters, they might seem, to the ear of fancy, like a requiem for the

devoted souls who, on this night, were destined to perish by a raging ocean and an irresistible tide. The seamews also gave notice of the tempest, by their clamours, as they winged their way to the crags among the rocks.

The storm visited the Mount with unmitigable fury. Its fitful gale shook with rude blasts the pictured windows of its venerable chapel, whistled shrilly through the hollow clefts of the rock, and caused the nun to cross herself in her cell, and to say a prayer to St. Michael, the protecting angel of all high places, as the ancient towers of the convent trembled, and the old doors creaked and burst open, whilst the very foundations of the rock seemed to shake to their centre with the fury of the storm.

At length, for a short space, there fell an unnatural calm. The winds paused in their wild, yet solemn anthem; and so much did the gloom deepen during that portentous calm, that night seemed as if about to anticipate her hour, and to chase the twilight of a summer evening from the earth. But this "strange tranquillity" was but like the pause which sometimes occurs in the headlong career of human passions; a pause in which the physical powers appear to gather up their concentrated strength to give yet greater force to the moral tempest in its most appalling burst. Even so was it now. The darkness, which hung as a shroud about St. Michael's, was, in a moment, dispersed by a sheet of liquid fire, that, attracted, no doubt, by the height of the rock, appeared to pour down upon it the electric matter with which the clouds were surcharged, as they gathered above the crest of the lofty Mount.

Flash succeeded flash, darkness light; the howling of the winds accompanied the roaring of the ocean and the screaming of the gulls, as the giant billows rolled onward, stronger, higher, fiercer, at every rush, whilst a raging tide lent both force and speed to their advance.

At this juncture, the Lady Alicia sat before the window which overlooked the terrace so often named, and commanded a view of the Mount, and the causeway that communicated with it at low tide. Every now and then she cast her eye towards the scene without, but started from her reclining position, on hearing Sampson observe to his wife "that those must be foolhardy people who were attempting to make their way from the Mount across the isthmus at such a time of the tide, and through such a gathering storm."

The kind-hearted Miriam flew to the window, and exclaimed

in an alarmed voice: "Alas! what is it I see? Horsemen and horses struggling to pass the isthmus in the midst of yonder waves, and the tide pouring in like a sluice, the more violently because of the gale; they will never reach the mainland alive.

"They may—they may yet be saved," said Sampson, "if their horses are stout and good, and can swim when their footing fails, as fail it must, before they can reach the strand. What madness to attempt the ford at such a time as this!"

"O God of Abraham!" said Miriam, clasping her hands together and looking upward, "do thou be with those unhappy people, even as thou wert with the children of Israel, when they fled across the Red Sea from the bondage of the Egyptians."

"The wind is at the east," said Sampson, "and the storm comes up against it. It is often so in a thunder-storm, on this western coast."

"O Father of Mercy!" continued Miriam, whose charity taught her to pray for Jew or Christian in such peril, "Do thou be to these gentiles in their danger, even as a shield and buckler of defence. Do thou stretch forth thy arm of mercy over yonder angry tide, and make the strong east wind to go back at thy bidding, so that the waters may be as a wall on the right hand and on the left, to let go by thy creatures in safety, in whose nostrils thou hast breathed the breath of life. O Father of Mercy! deface not thine own image, spare them!"

Sampson shook his head, and looked sad, but said not a word of hope.

"But what is that I see that looks so white yonder, like the wing of the sea-mew fluttering in the gale?" said Miriam, "that white thing I see on yonder struggling steed, behind the second horseman? Alas! it is a woman.—See!—see! her white veil now rises with the wind and floats above the surge."

"A woman!" exclaimed the Lady Alicia, as she started from her seat, her feelings acting as an instinct at this moment to call up her fears, for they told her that the woman, who was seen thus perilously placed behind the horseman on the struggling horse, was the Lady Adela.

How often is it seen that, in moments of extreme danger, our affections, without an effort of our judgment, without a single calculation of our reason, speak, as it were, at once the truth, and present before our view the whole extent of an apprehended evil, whilst those who are less interested in the

event, see a cause for hope which has no ground in probability. Whence is this? Surely because that very strength of affection (that can see hope where no hope lies, so long as its own efforts can be called into play), in cases where it can do absolutely nothing, where it can make no exertion, and is condemned to stand and look on, with an eye fixed on the peril that threatens its dearest object, sees with greater certainty than any other eye the calamity that neither human means nor human love can avert.

It was so at this crisis; for scarcely had the agonized sight of the Lady Alicia beheld the few horsemen struggling through the roaring waters of the isthmus, and one of them bearing with him, on the same steed, a figure whose white drapery floating in the wind, spoke her to be a woman, than her own heart told her the form was that of Adela. She conjectured that the horseman was Sir Henry de Pomeroy, that his errand to the Mount had been to free her from her cell; how little thinking that, by such an act, he, in all probability, would but hasten her destruction!

To describe the agonized state of the wretched Lady Alicia as the sight, whilst she was labouring under this conviction, would be impossible. She dropt on her knees,—she clasped her hands together, and remained for some moments absorbed in mental prayer; only the words “God have mercy!” escaped in audible sounds from her lips. This done, she arose and summoned, or rather endeavoured to summon, that strong spirit of resolution to her aid which might enable her to await with submission the issue of the daring attempt of those who were endeavouring to make their way through the rising waters.

But whilst she did so, not the tempest without raged more fearfully than did that within her own soul,—for there her heart smote her with the renewed pangs of an undying remorse; and the words—“Thou hast found me, O mine enemy!” that she murmured as she cast her forlorn and despairing looks towards the sea, spoke but too plainly the fatal truth; that conscience now whispered to her each guilty recollection, as at the bidding of that dread monitor, they rose like fearful spectres before her view, to tell her the terrors which now possessed her soul were but as stern forebodings of the coming judgments of an avenging God.

The spirit that had once upheld her ungoverned passions, she felt was about to desert her in this her hour of need; to give her up a prey to the last evil that can fall on the guilty

head, the evil of despair. Sampson, who saw her distress, and were it possible, was willing to alleviate it, said—

“There is hope for them yet; for as long as yonder base of the cross—the cross of stone, the sign of the Christian’s faith—is seen above the waters, there is hope. Let its base be once covered, and I will not say but that, like Pharaoh and his host, both horsemen and horses, the Lord will overwhelm in the midst of the sea.”*

“Oh! be the holy cross their preservation,” said the Lady Alicia. “Oh, blessed sign! the waves have not yet reached it! they may be preserved by its power.”

“Not by wood or stone can man’s life be preserved,” said Miriam, “be it the sign of the faith of Jew or Gentile. The cherubim above the mercy-seat had no power to dispense mercy, though the image was holy. It was the covenant of the ark which the mercy-seat ever shadowed, that could alone save. Even so, lady, put not thy trust in yonder tall cross of stone, however sacred may be the form it bears in thy sight. But rather put thy trust in Him, who is not as the deaf and blind God of the idolators. It is He who is seen, even by the raging waters, before whom they become afraid and the depths are troubled. Pray to Him to quell their fury, and may the Father of both Jew and Gentile hear thy prayer.”

As Miriam spoke, the Lady Alicia stood, scarcely sensible of the import of her words. She looked white as the veil that encircled her head, her lips quivering, scarcely drawing breath; silent, and almost motionless in the awe of an expectation so dreadful, so suspended. Her eye, strained but not fixed, alternately glanced to the sign of safety, or to the advancing riders, and looked from one to the other, with the struggles of hope and fear within her heart; whilst the horsemen came on a few steps, or the waves arose and broke in sheets of foam, far above the base of the cross, or retreating in their long hollows, left bare the isthmus to its very bed. As her eye gazed on these terrible signs, not the penitent in the hour of his parting breath, looks to the cross held out to him by the attendant priest, with more eagerness, as his only remaining trust, than did the Lady Alicia now keep her entire soul fixed on that which arose before her aching sight, as the last, last hope of Adela’s safety. She looked till her

* The stone cross here named, that stood on the isthmus leading to St. Michael’s Mount, was erected in the time of Edward the Confessor. It stood for centuries, a cross surrounded by the sea at high tide. It was swept away in a great storm, about ninety years ago; the base of it still remains, and may be seen among the rocks and stones at low water.

head became dizzy, and feeling she was unable longer to support herself, tottered towards a seat that was somewhat apart from the window, sank down, and covered her eyes with her hands, as if to shut out from her view a sight of too much horror.

Miriam tried to comfort her, but not with words, for well did she know there are moments when all speech is unavailing; when the mind is too much overborne to be able to comprehend even the full extent of that religious hope, which, in all extremities, is the only beacon light to be descried amidst the darkness and the terrors of the moral storm. In such moments a single ejaculation, a "God have mercy!" is all the prayer that may be required by Him who knows our weakness, who remembers we are but dust, and can listen to the prayer of the heart, when that of the lips is mute.

The gentle sympathy of compassionate tears from the melting eye of pity, and all those little acts which speak a feeling heart, were not spared by Miriam towards the unhappy sufferer. But, alas! she saw them not,—she heeded them not,—every faculty of body and soul being bound up in one expectation, one hope, one fear—"could the base of the cross still be seen?"

"No, lady, no!" exclaimed Sampson, "the sign of safety may be no longer seen. It has sunk amid the billows; sheets of foam now cover the base of that cross, which rises like the tall mast of a galley above the stormy waters, when the body of the vessel is a wreck."

"Father of Mercy! it is still seen," said Miriam: "see, the billows retreat, and the base of the cross comes forth again; there is hope still,—hope that yonder sufferers shall not die this death."

"God be praised!" exclaimed the Lady Alicia: "O saints of heaven! have mercy in this dreadful hour!"

"O lady! hope not too soon," said Miriam, her countenance changing, "lest thy sorrow come upon thee as did that occasioned by the death of the first-born, in the night, and in great fear. See how yonder horsemen strive and struggle, as the waves dash up against them; look! one is covered; you see nothing but a sheet of foam, like a snow heap on a rock."

"Now he rises from it," said Sampson; "see how his horse breasts the waves! he rears himself above them. Oh! it is a terrible sight!—how the brave animal strives! it is a noble instinct to save his rider;—and, oh! look, surely those nearest the rock will perish."

"Who will perish? Not the horseman with Adela?" exclaimed the Lady Alicia, in a voice of terror.

"No, no!" replied Miriam, "that horseman lives and struggles still,—he approaches the cross; the sea is not yet risen above the animal's breast;—but the creature has become unmanageable, there is something amiss. What is it? How it seems to strive;—see, another horseman endeavours to give his assistance, but he is driven back by yonder dark and giant billow, which comes roaring between, seeking its prey."

"And look, Miriam," whispered Sampson, so as not to be heard by the Lady Alicia, "look, how that unhappy woman stretches abroad her arms, as if asking help from the shore; and now she raises them to heaven. Oh, brave horseman!—noble horse,—that was a desperate plunge, yet it is vain,—the horse is entangled, his foot must be fast in some hollow of the rocks,—horse and rider will be lost. But again, see how the creature struggles, plunges,—that last effort has set him free; he rears on having made it.—Again he dashes forward;—but where is the woman? I see not the white garment above the waves."

"It floats upon them," exclaimed Miriam; "O God of Israel! she is lost!"

"My child! my child!" cried Lady Alicia, and rushing towards the windows, as she uttered these words in a tone of agony that pierced the ear and chilled the blood, she lost all consciousness, and fell forward on the ground, deprived of sense and motion.

Miriam called for assistance. Orpha, her young handmaid, hastened to give it. They raised the wretched woman from the ground, and did all that humanity or skill could suggest to restore her to life, and to administer to her such comfort as they could offer, however unavailing, in an hour of such unmitigable suffering.

Sampson had not tarried to give his assistance to the lady, for he had seen that the foremost horseman had become desperate, after the unfortunate female, who was under his charge, had been lost among the breakers, and that he was himself saved, apparently contrary to his own will, by the determination and exertions of another rider, who had come to his aid, and, at the risk of his own life, dragged the wretched man's horse by the bridle in safety to the shore. A third rider followed close on their steps, and suddenly lent his assistance also to the preservation of the horseman, who made more than one effort to shake himself free from those that would persist

in saving his life; and, at length, so happily accomplished their purpose.

Sampson, though more cautious, and far less generous than his wife, was nevertheless a man of humanity; and having seen what we have here related, it occurred to him that he and his people might be of service to the sufferers. Calling, therefore, three or four Jewish youths, a part of his household, about him, he left Miriam to attend on the Lady Alicia, and hastened to the beach. There he met the newly rescued and his band in a state of dire distress, and offering to do for them all the friendly offices he could, conducted them in a wary manner to a postern door, concealed from general observation by an abutment of the rocks, which led by a long and narrow passage into his own house; when there arrived, he spared no act of kindness that the circumstances of the case required at his hand.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Oh! could'st thou but know
 With what a deep devotedness of woe
 I wept thy absence—o'er and o'er again
 Thinking of thee, still thee, till thought grew pain,
 And memory, like a drop that, night and day,
 Falls cold and ceaseless, wore my heart away.

MOORE.

WHEN the Lady Alicia de Beaumont was restored to her senses, she found herself on a couch in the room whence she had witnessed the fatal catastrophe. Miriam was weeping by her side. Sir Henry de Pomeroy stood near; his arms folded across his breast, his air distracted, his countenance pale, every feature expressive of a despair that preyed upon his heart, and rendered life to him as a burthen, which seemed too insupportable long to be borne with "all its woe."

Cædmon, to whose exertions, at the imminent risk of his own life, De Pomeroy owed his preservation, stood by his side; every now and then he looked in Sir Henry's face with an eager and inquiring eye, but did not venture to break the calm of his despair by speaking to him, in these the first moments of his distress, anything so vain as words of consolation.

The palmer, who had united his efforts to those of Cædmon to save De Pomeroy, was also present. He alone preserved his self-command. The solemnity of his manner, and the train of reflection which usually occupied his mind and characterised his countenance, could scarcely be rendered more impressive by any new event, however calamitous.

He stood erect, grave, thoughtful; an observant witness of the distress of all around him; yet was there something in his looks and manner that seemed to indicate he was prepared rather to call on others to give their attention to him, than to afford his own to their sufferings at such a crisis.

The alarm, the confusion, of so sudden and so violent a shock, the unavailing grief of such moments, at first prevented all attempts at explanation. It was not, therefore, till some words of passionate sorrow, dropped by Sir Henry, met the palmer's ear, that he came forward in a manner which surprised and almost overwhelmed all who were present at this most remarkable scene. The conduct of the palmer was, perhaps, without any previous design. But the occasion offered itself, and he was led on by the strong feelings within his own breast.

"Unhappy man!" he said, addressing De Pomeroy; "yet not so unhappy in that which seems to you the greatest cause for sorrow—the loss of the unfortunate Adela. Peace be to the departed! her pure spirit has fled, like the dove upon its wing, far away from the stormy wind and the tempest of this rude world and all its woes. Grieve not for her, but rather for yourself, and repent of that meditated act, which would have become a crime of the most deadly nature, had heaven allowed it to take place. Bless the Father of Mercy that you were not permitted to accomplish so great a sin. I purposed to reveal to you the fatal truth; but ere I did so, I wished to gain speech with this most wretched woman, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont. The will of heaven, made known in the calamity of this hour, has in some measure changed my purpose; and now, therefore, do I speak. Give not way to despair; rejoice rather that, by death, the wound no time could have healed, which must have given a fatal blow to the peace of the innocent Adela, has been prevented. Weep not then for her loss; but weep rather for your own fearful ignorance, when I tell you, that in the gentle being you lament, you have lost, not a bride, but a sister; for you and Adela were the offspring of one parent; the late Lord de Pomeroy was the father to you both, and that unhappy woman was her guilty mother!"

The palmer pointed to the Lady Alicia as he spoke.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy stood mute; a sense of horror, mingled with surprise, deprived him of all power of utterance; he shuddered at the very thought of the crime he had in ignorance committed—that of having sought his own sister for his wife. As soon as he could regain the power of speech, and could collect his scattered senses so as to be capable of inquiry, he cast a reproachful look on the Lady Alicia, as he said, "Why did you not tell me this? wherefore conceal from me, from Adela, a truth so fatal, when, in ignorance of our

close kindred, I was at the first induced by Abbot Baldwin to think of my dear lost sister with other than a brother's sacred love! I can see it all now. It was on this account you severed us for ever; and by immuring her against her will in the cells of yonder Mount, you exposed me to the cruel alternative, to see her sacrificed to forced vows as a nun, or to attempt her deliverance. I did attempt it, and by my means has she met a watery grave! And I live to tell it—live to lament the sweetest sister that was ever given to a brother's love. Unhappy Adela! her goodness and her beauty were beyond all praise. O most wretched woman! you who have so deceived us both to misery and ruin, you have destroyed your child!"

A groan of agony burst from the bosom of the Lady Alicia as she heard these so justly merited reproaches cast upon her by Sir Henry de Pomeroy. She essayed to speak her feelings, her sorrows, her devoted love for Adela, her unavailing repentance; but so overwhelming was the nature of her distress, she could but utter a few scarcely connected sentences. "Oh! could my life redeem hers, it should be given, thankfully given to restore my child!—my child, my Adela, lost—lost, and by my means! This is too much. I could not summon resolution sufficient to degrade myself in her eyes—in yours. I could not speak the fatal truth, but Abbot Baldwin knew all. I confessed all to him; and it was by his advice that I devoted my unhappy child to a cell."

"The wily monk!" said Sir Henry de Pomeroy; "and he, too, has deceived me! But who are you?" he added, turning to the palmer, "you, who from the first seem to have possessed a full knowledge of these most miserable circumstances, by which the innocent have been made to suffer, whilst the guilty go free—you who hold my father's token and accuse his fame, say, who are you?"

The Lady Alicia looked up at hearing these words so vehemently addressed to the palmer by Sir Henry. She looked and shuddered as the recollection of the scene in the chapel of St. Magdalen crossed her mind; but she was too deeply affected to do more than repeat, as she did with a feeling of indescribable terror, the words of Sir Henry, and "Say, who are you?" burst also from her lips.

"Do you not know me, Alicia de Beaumont?" said the Palmer, as he threw back his hood, and the face being no longer shrouded, she at once recognised him. A chill stole through her veins as she did so, and placing her hands before

her eyes, as if to shut out a sight that was insupportable, an ejaculation of horror and surprise escaped her lips.

"Now do you know me, Alicia de Beaumont?" said the Palmer; "or have seventeen years passed in the burning plains and cities of the East, with the sorrows of a broken heart, so changed me, that, in the ruin before you, there remains no trace by which you can recognise a fond and injured husband?"

The Lady Alicia clasped her hands together, raised her streaming eyes, and threw herself wildly at the palmer's feet, as she exclaimed, "Pardon—oh, pardon!—forbear all reproach. In this hour of unutterable misery, crush me not to the earth—break not the bruised and wounded reed! I can but die, and that will make all well."

The Palmer raised her. "Be calm," he said, "be calm; it is for no purpose of resentment that I am here. I know thy heart is penitent, or never, unhappy woman, never would I have returned into this land, that was once the scene of my greatest happiness, the scene also of my dishonour and of thy shame."

"Could your heart but know what mine has suffered, you would relent," said Lady Alicia; "you would know the wrath of an offended God has filled to the brim my cup of misery; that the wine is red, and that I have drunk it to the dregs. My sorrows have been fearful; my melancholy days, my dream-haunted nights, the stings of an awakened conscience, have been as those of the scorpion to my soul. Such were my sufferings, that my most cruel creditor in injury would have wished in mercy the account were closed in death. Deep has been my sin—long and severe my punishment. God's justice found it out; his arrows were abroad, and here," she added, as she emphatically laid her hand on her heart, "here have they struck."

"Remember, lady," said Miriam, "the hand that strikes can heal. Take comfort, then; heaven will not always strive with the sinner, the sufferer; it will give rest to the sorrowful at the last. Egypt was justly condemned with seven-fold plagues; the consuming fire ran along the ground—it was swift justice, God gave it wings; yet even for that guilty land was there at last a rest."

"But my father," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy, "what of my father? I have yet to learn his part in these most unhappy circumstances. Remember the token—I must know the truth."

"It is one that you, as his son, will blush to hear," said the Palmer. "Your father was my most trusted friend; we were to have gone as brothers-in-arms to the Holy Land together: when, such is the false heart of man, on my being directed by the prince I served, to leave England on the sudden, ere your father could be prepared to go with me—how shall I speak what followed!—Oh! summer friendship of my most false and flattering friend!—no sooner was I gone than he sought my wife—my wife, she who lived at Wilsworthy, like a widow in her weeds, in the decency of an honest sorrow for her absent lord; but thy father found her fair and frail. He made excuses for not following me so speedily as I expected to the Holy Land; and by a thousand arts won the ear of my unguarded wife; stole into her easy faith, gained her frail affection, and having found her as a flower, in the unsullied beauty of her innocence, never ceased his wicked wiles till he had rifled its chaste sweets, and threw it as a worthless weed away. Adela, the lost Adela, was the fruit of their unhallowed love"

"But she was innocent,—she never knew the wretched secret of her birth," said Sir Henry; "she has passed out of life ignorant, even as she was innocent of all blame. I will not, then, lament her,—but, oh that I had died with her! I should have been spared this hour."

The Lady Alicia, whilst the Palmer made Sir Henry acquainted with these fearful circumstances, sat in speechless agony, hearing, yet scarcely seeming to comprehend all he said, so wild, so agitated were her looks and her demeanour.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy at length inquired how it was that the unhappy Adela had been passed on the world as the daughter and heiress of the late Lord de Marmoutier, the brother of the Lady Alicia de Beaumont. The palmer made no reply, but turned to her, and looked as if he commanded an answer from herself. She paused to collect her scattered senses, and then said, "Guilty, but not hardened in guilt, on hearing a report, the truth of which no one doubted, that my husband had died in the Holy Land, I fled into Normandy, ere Adela was born,—my soul torn by remorse, for now too late did I know the worth of the husband whose fond trust I had so abused, and the worthlessness of him for whose sake I had so erred. Adela was born in secret; a Jewess, whose life, with that of her husband, I had formerly saved, by a timely intercession with my brother, who, for some offence had condemned them both to die,—that Jewess, the kind

Miriam, attended me in the hour of my distress, took from me the infant Adela, and nursed her in obscurity, but with the fondest care. At length, my brother dying, he left me in charge of his orphan daughter; she was not many months older than my own child. I determined to return with my infant niece into England, as I had paid the fine to the king in purchase of the guardianship to my brother's orphan heir-ess. She was a tender blossom, and soon blighted; she died of an infantine fever on our way through Normandy to the coast. Tempted by the opportunity, I concerted measures with Miriam and her husband to conceal from the world at large the death of my brother's child, and to cause my own to be substituted in her place, and to bear her name; for hitherto I had seen my daughter but in stolen interviews, and dared not call her mine. Our immediate removal to England favoured the plan; no one suspected the truth; and my devoted affection to Adela appeared in the eyes of all men a natural and a generous love for my orphan ward, the child of my deceased brother. Adela herself knew me but as such, and never suspected how much dearer she was to this heart than the offspring of another could ever be to it. Only one other individual, except Miriam and her husband, knew the fatal truth; that other was an aged man, a brother of the order of St. Francis, to whom circumstances compelled me to reveal my wretched story on the death of my brother's child, and the substitution of my own. I paid largely to his convent and its charities to secure his secrecy. He promised to be faithful; but, though he wished to serve me, I have some cause for suspecting my secret became too heavy a burthen for a tender conscience; for, some time after, he very suddenly left England, fled to the Holy Land, and was heard of no more. In all probability he died in Syria."

"No," said the Palmer, "that poor but faithful servant of the church did not die there. After the lapse of some months, he received from a brother of his order, on his return from the Holy Land, some information which led him to conclude I was not really dead. With this prepossession acting on a mind already alarmed by the reproaches of conscience, for being the keeper of a secret in which there was so much of falsehood and of guilt, he sought me over land and seas, and at length found me. From him I learnt the dreadful truth; and that Adela, whom I supposed to be only the niece and ward of my wife (her brother having died in Normandy some time after I had quitted England), was her own daughter,—

the offspring of her guilty love, by her base paramour, the Baron de Pomeroy, my most treacherous friend. On hearing this, related with such evidence of facts that rendered doubt impossible, in the bitterness of my soul I vowed vengeance on the despoiler of my honour and my peace; and that, should my vengeance be accomplished, I would dedicate the remainder of my days to the service of the Red Cross in the East; and, till that service should no longer be required, I would never more revisit England,—the scene of my happiness, of my misery. I also vowed that, whenever I did so revisit my native land, it should be as a palmer under penance, in deep humility, and I would never, even under circumstances of the strongest temptation, reveal my name, my rank, or my sorrows, till I had first accomplished a pilgrimage to the most holy places of the West, and had made my prayers and my offerings at the Mount of St. Michael on the Eve of St. John, that being the day on which I bade the last farewell to my wife, whilst she was yet innocent of falsehood and of guilt."

"I can now most fully comprehend all that has hitherto appeared so mysterious," said Sir Henry. "It was, then, by your hand that my father fell in the East, and to you he lost his honour's pledge?"

"He did," said the Palmer: "I accused him of his guilt; he endeavoured to defend it, as far as a cause so bad would admit defence. He denied having used any arts such as I had charged him with using—the arts of the hag and the magician—as the means of my wife's seduction. He pledged his token, the silver spur, that he would maintain with his sword the honour of his name. We met; the sense of my injuries gave strength to my arm and firmness to my spirit, whilst with the Lord de Pomeroy it was otherwise; brave as he was, yet when called forth in so unjust a quarrel, his hand was unnerved, it made a coward of his heart,—he fell at the first blow. Here is his token. It is yours, Sir Henry, would you desire to redeem it by the way of arms; John de Beaumont, for such is my name, will not deny you a fair field to regain it, if you think the ancient token of your house, a house once honourable in all its branches, should be so redeemed by you."

"Never," said De Pomeroy, "never! my sword would drop from my hand, could I think to raise it against a man so injured as thyself. My father's sins have long since been called to an account before the bar of heaven. His fair fame I would have defended with the last drop of my blood; but I will not draw a sword in support of his dishonour: I can but blush for

the cause. Farewell my Lord de Beaumont; I must hence. After what has this day happened at the Mount, I must not tarry near it. I owe a duty to the dead. When the storm has ceased, and the tide is low, some whom I will leave here for the purpose, must seek for the body of my unhappy sister. If it is washed on shore, it shall be interred within consecrated ground. Mass and requiem shall be sung for the repose of her soul throughout all the convents of the West: whilst her monument—she has a living one in my bosom."

As he spoke the tears long suppressed rushed into his eyes, and so completely was he overcome by a sense of sorrow for her loss, that, unwilling those who were present should witness his deep distress, Sir Henry hastily left the apartment. In a state of mind bordering on frenzy, from the complicated nature of his feelings, he gave directions to some of his people to cause a strict search to be made for the body of Adela, mounted his horse and rode off, attended only by Cædmon, and two or three men-at-arms.

After his departure, the palmer turned to the Lady Alicia, who was endeavouring to support her head on the bosom of her faithful Miriam.

"Unhappy woman," he said, "ere I bid you for ever farewell, receive from the husband you have so deeply injured, his pardon of all injury; nay, more, his pity for what has this day chanced to wring your soul with agony. O Alicia! though I am a broken-hearted man, for whom the world contains not a thing, in all its wearying round, to pleasure him, yet, even now, I cannot look upon you without emotions that shake and unman my foolish breast. Alicia, how I loved you! The slightest accent of endearment from thy lips, were to me as the sweetest music; whilst to receive a mark of affection from thy hand, a look that spake it from thy eye, was welcome to my soul as the sound of the fountains of the desert to the thirsty pilgrim on his way. What happiness did I lose, in losing thee! But I will not now look back upon the past. The blow that was struck at my peace came from an unsuspected hand. I am its victim; and here I stand, the ruin of myself."

The palmer paused a moment; looked sorrowfully upon the afflicted lady, and thus continued, in a voice and manner that were no less affectionate than solemn:—

"Farewell, Alicia, farewell! my purpose is accomplished; receive my last forgiveness. Retire into some religious house. Give thy wealth to the church and to the poor,—thyself to

God. Seek by tears of penitence to wash out thine offences; and may peace and blessing be thine. My vows compel me to visit again the Holy Land, as there is a prospect of a renewed attempt for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre from infidel hands: thither do I go, and thence I shall never more return. Farewell, then, my most beloved Alicia, for ever farewell!"

He clasped the wretched penitent to his bosom, as she bade him a last and distracted adieu; and no sooner was he gone than she sank into such a state of suffering and distress, that those who were about her believed that night would be her last. She lived, however, under such an access of fever it was impossible she could be removed from the house of the Jew, and there she continued during several weeks.

Miriam attended upon her Christian benefactress with the utmost care throughout her illness, and whilst the unhappy woman hung between life and death, often revolved in her own mind the agitating events of the Eve of St. John, and the wretched fate of the guilty, sorrowing, and bereaved Lady Alicia, bereaved both as a wife and as a mother. And often did she say to her spouse Sampson, that notwithstanding the persecutions to which, as Jews, they were so constantly exposed, not to gain the whole world would she exchange situations with her benefactress, who she considered to have been as signally punished for her crime, as was Queen Bathsheba by the death of the child, the offspring of David, whilst she was yet the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

On the morning after her death the body of the unfortunate Adela was washed on shore; and being speedily discovered by the followers of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, it was removed with every mark of respect to the convent of the Cistercian nuns, near Tregony, in Cornwall, of which town Sir Henry held the lordship. As he had directed, information of what had happened was instantly conveyed to him. He was not far off, having fled on the previous night to his manor of Tregony. In a short time he arrived at the convent.

Contrary to all expectation, Sir Henry refused to look on the corpse of his beloved and most unfortunate sister; assigning as his reason for such refusal, that he wished not to have the memory of her, as he had so lately seen her, in life and beauty, effaced from his mind. Nothing had as yet disturbed that recollection, and not for worlds would he lose, in its fairest view, the image of one so lovely, so gentle, and so good. He desired to think of her only as an angel of light;

nor would he have a recollection of decay and death to mingle itself with the bright vision of his imagination—one that was the dearest and most consolatory to the feelings of his heart.

Sir Henry prepared to attend the funeral, ere he departed from Tregony, with much caution, as his sudden capture and brief possession of St. Michael's Mount on the Eve of St. John, for the Earl of Mortaigne, had drawn upon him the attention of all the friends and officials in the interests of King Richard throughout Cornwall. Justly, therefore, fearing some sudden assault, and even an arrest, for his bold and rebellious deed, Sir Henry armed both himself and his followers; so that the obsequies of the Lady Adela, performed within the chapel of a peaceful sisterhood of nuns, were more like those of a feudal baron in a time of civil strife, than the last rites paid to virgin innocence and beauty untimely consigned to the tomb. Sir Henry attended as chief mourner, armed to the teeth, with helmet and mail, shield and sword; supported by a stout band of yeomen and archers, equally prepared to stand by his defence. But no disturbance was offered, and the remains of the unfortunate Adela were consigned to their mother earth, amid the masses and requiems of the church, and the tears of the nuns. And amid also the manly sorrow of those who could look on death in a field of arms as a sight of exultation, when in the enthusiasm of victory they proclaimed the day to be their own; but who could not see it in the lovely and the young, so early cut off, without those vain regrets and awakened sympathies, that turned their customary sternness into a sorrow no less honourable to themselves, than to the dead whom they deplored.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy, after the ceremonies were ended, was observed to cast one long and last look upon the grave, where the remains of his sister were deposited. He looked intently; his heart spoke in his eyes; that heart was big with sorrow; but not a word was spoken, he had no power to give utterance to his feelings. Slowly and silently he withdrew from the chapel; mounted a horse that stood ready for him without; went forward, attended only by Cædmon and a few of his most trusted followers, took some obscure road, and, except by those who were admitted to his confidence, he was heard of no more for several weeks. At length, without any previous notice being given to the châtelain, or to his people, he suddenly appeared before the gates of his castle of Berry Pomeroy in Devon, and there he took up his abode: but of this, and other matters of import, we must speak in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXII.

He woke to watch the lamp, and tell,
From hour to hour, the castle bell,
Or listen to the owl's cry,
Or the sad breeze that whistles by,
Or catch by fits the tuneful rhyme,
With which the warder cheats the time,
And envying, think, how, when the sun
Bids the poor soldier's watch be done,
Couched on his straw, and fancy free,
He sleeps like careless infancy.

SCOTT.

TWELVE months had passed away, and had brought with them their usual vicissitudes, their measure of weal and woe, to the several personages of our history, and much of change also to this realm of England, ere we once more resume the thread of our narrative, in its most remarkable events.

Richard, in the interval, had returned from his captivity, once more to resume the sceptre of regal power, which his wily and treacherous brother, John Earl of Mortaigne, had so industriously laboured to wrest from him during his imprisonment and misfortunes.

The return of the heroic Richard was at a moment the most favourable for his own safety, and that of the kingdom at large. It reanimated the party who had been true and faithful to him; it confirmed and fixed in their allegiance the doubtful and the wavering; it struck a panic into the hearts of the seditious; put to flight many of his most treacherous foes, cooled the enterprises of others, and finally, so completely broke the party of the rebel prince, that John, seeing his cause was hopeless, hastened to throw himself at his brother's feet, to beg his forgiveness for the past, and to offer his allegiance for the future. Whilst, as a proof of his sincerity, he hesitated not to betray, and to give up to the king's wrath, some of those very adherents who had put themselves within

the power of this despicable prince, by having espoused his rebellious cause.

At this juncture, several of the principal barons who had contributed their support to the late insurrections during the captivity of Richard, no sooner heard of his return to his kingdom, and that he was welcomed by all classes of men, than desirous to secure their own safety, yet doubting the royal pardon, they hastened to shelter themselves among their followers and vassals, within the strong walls of their feudal castles. There they designed to await the result of those measures the king might be disposed to take with them, before they decided on a renewed fealty, or an open resistance that should have for its object the preservation of their lives.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy, whose awowed, active, and most zealous support of the Earl of Mortaigne is so well known to the reader, was one of those who, on the earliest intimation of Richard's return, and John's treachery to his partisans, had so retreated to his castle of Berry Pomeroy, situated about three miles from Totness in Devonshire. Had not the cause we have named compelled him to fly to this retreat, he would, in all probability, have sought it; for so deep was his sense of the calamitous circumstances we have recorded in the last chapter, that the melancholy and solitude which seemed to be natural to its walls, harmonised with the feelings he indulged for his own overwhelming afflictions.

At the period of which we now speak the castle of Berry Pomeroy was a noble pile; strong, massive, and imposing in its character and construction. It had been erected by Ralph de Pomeroy, who passed over into England in the warlike train of the invading William, and who was one among the most distinguished warriors in the memorable field of Hastings. The Conqueror rewarded the services of this powerful baron, by giving him no less than fifty-eight lordships; amongst these were the manors of Tregony in Cornwall, and Berry in Devon: on the latter he built one of the very strongest and most stately castles of the West; and thenceforth took the name of Berry Pomeroy.

The castle so erected was situated on the top of a lofty rock; it arose abruptly from the east, and, in part, overhung a small stream called the Hemms. On this side, the castle walls towered above a terrace that lay along the level space, and close to the verge of the declivity.

This terrace commanded a fine view of the heights, woods,

and hills, on the opposite side the valley, and looked down on the small stream we have just named, that ran brawling over masses of rock and stone at the base of this eastern and inaccessible precipice.

The south front of the castle, saving it had not the advantage of being seen on the summit of a rocky height, was, in itself, no less striking. Its towers and walls were strongly battlemented. Towards the western end stood the gateway, guarded by its stout and warlike towers, on either side. The entrance was doubly portcullised, and over its vaulted archway was the guard-room, or first ward.

The castle, even at this early period, stood embosomed in woods; altogether, its profound silence, its solitude, and gloom, seemed to the eye of a stranger more suited to the contemplative spirit of the monks, than to the fierce, stirring, and warlike character of those who were now the inhabitants of its walls.

Its deep retirement, however, its lonely shades, and vast and melancholy halls, as we have already observed, suited well with the present feelings of its unfortunate possessor, the young Lord of Berry Pomeroy; who, at the time we opened this chapter, lived within the ancient dwelling of his forefathers, more like a wayfarer, who had there taken up his temporary abode as a shelter from the wind and storm from without, than as the rightful and assured master of so powerful a castle.

Though Sir Henry never mentioned the name of Adela, yet in many things, some even the most trifling, he shewed how strong, how tender were the recollections he cherished within his breast, of his unhappy sister. This was most apparent, when, even in the midst of his own anxious concerns, remembering how fondly she had been attached to her faithful bower-maiden, Grace Bolt, he caused her to be sought after, and brought to his castle. Grace was easily discovered; for she had left the convent the day after her young mistress had been so violently removed from it to meet her most untimely and disastrous fate. Once more did she, for a few months, re-enter the household of the Lady Alicia at Wilsworthy. But she soon quitted it, and returned home again to her father at the mills; till, fearing a new persecution on the part of the still amorous and disconsolate Sir Simon, she was easily prevailed with to leave them, and to accept the respectable office of under-housekeeper, or, as it was called, mistress of the spices and the napery at Berry Pomeroy Castle. This

mention of the miller's maid will prepare our readers for meeting her once more, as it is of her we have now somewhat to say.

In a small room, whose narrow confines received their sole illumination from a little latticed window in the ground-floor of one of the massive Norman towers that looked into the court-yard of the castle, sat Grace Bolt. She was dressed, not altogether so dismally as when she was an unwilling inhabitant within the cells of St. Michael, nor yet so gaily as when she came forth from her father's mill to dance round the May-pole, on the green of her native town, on a bright May-day. Her countenance was thinner, less round, and far less cheerful than formerly; when her sprightliness and bloom had so completely caught the heart and bewildered the shallow wits of the luckless Sir Simon, the curate. But now, with a mouth that smiled as the lips spoke, and an eye that would have kept company with that smile, had not a tear forced its way to contradict it, did Grace bid welcome to her old acquaintance and playfellow, Patch, the fool, who had come in the train of a newly arrived guest to Berry Pomeroy Castle. Grace made him very welcome, seated him in the little dark nook she by her office in the household was licensed to call her own apartment, and set before him a good jug of stout ale, flanked by some cold viands of a quality and sufficiency to do credit to the hospitality of the castle.

Patch seemed altered too, for he neither looked so merry, nor was so merry, as he used to be in times past. He still wore his motley, his guarded coat, and his cap and bells, but he did not jingle them as he had been wont to do, on arriving at this or any other honourable dwelling; for though a fool by profession, he seemed perfectly to understand that folly suits not well with those whose hearts have become less light, and whose heads have grown more thoughtful.

Patch and Grace had not met for many a long day; it was, therefore, with a better feeling than mere idle curiosity, that they now inquired of each other what might have been their several fortunes since they last parted; and how it happened that each had passed into a new service.

To Grace's inquiry, Patch readily replied, and as his communication will be found one of more than ordinary interest to the readers of our narrative, we shall give it at full, with all the little circumstances detailed by the narrator.

"Surely you must, or ought to know, Grace," said her old gossiping friend, "for the matter is both simple and natural,

that Wilsworthy has a new master now; though, as I may say, an old one,—yet not an old one neither, in one sense of the word; and so I, who am one of the living properties of the estate, which might be very logically proved, as much as either dog, calf, or sheep, on the domain, so I have passed, with the live stock of Wilsworthy, into the service of a new master; if you, my old acquaintance, can but comprehend how all this may be."

"I can comprehend," replied Grace, "that I, who am young in years, have yet been known long enough by thee, Master Patch, to be called old acquaintance; but I cannot comprehend how thy new master can be at once a young and an old man."

"Why thus," said Patch. "Cædmon, the Saxon thane, is now master of Wilsworthy; inasmuch as he hath succeeded the late possessor, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, and he is now my master. And she was as much; for though she was my mistress as a woman, yet was she my master, as having the lordship over me and all her vassals. And as Cædmon was, by his progenitorship by his old Saxon grandfather, and by his own father, the natural heir and lord of Wilsworthy, he may with great truth be called, though a young man, an old master; and hither is he to come to-day, to visit Sir Henry in his own castle of Berry Pomeroy."

"Well," said Grace, "I am glad of it; for Cædmon the Saxon was ever a handsome and a kindly youth. But how he should come to take possession of his own, as I may call it, seems to me very wonderful; because, as I have heard tell, he being a Saxon, could not inherit anything, if the king had set his face against it."

"Ay, but the king did not set his face against it," said Patch. "God bless our fighting king, he would rather humble the heads of the Saracens than Christians, even though they do stand on Saxon shoulders."

"Prithee, then," said Grace, "do tell me how it all chanced, for to me it is a riddle past finding out."

"Why, thus it happened," said Patch: "King Richard, on his return, had Cædmon up before the council, with the others whom the sheriff of Cornwall laid hold upon, for being concerned in that affair of the seizing of St. Michael's Mount for Prince John. Cædmon declared, and some papers found upon him proved he spoke the truth, that he had joined in that affair from no wish to aid in the work of treason, but for the sole purpose of assisting in the deliverance of the Lady Adela,

who, against her will, had been carried into the cells of the convent in the old Mount, with the intention to compel her to take the veil."

"I doubt not he spoke the truth to the king," said Grace; "alas! for the poor Lady Adela!"

"Great rewards were offered to Cædmon by the council," continued Patch: "and the king himself offered to become his friend, would he but give information as to the part Sir Henry de Pomeroy had taken in seizing the Mount for Prince John,—his plans, his measures, his partisans. But it was all in vain; nothing could prevail with Cædmon to become a betrayer of his friend: and so nobly did he bear himself before the king and council, that Richard, ever chivalrous, and loving to play the magnanimous knight more than the avenging king, struck by the poor Saxon youth's bold denial to play the part of a traitor to his friend, asked him what terms he would accept, and what he would do to serve the state, should he, Richard, give him liberty, and confer on him a benefit. 'I would, royal Richard,' replied the Saxon youth, 'draw my sword for you to the death in any just cause, consistent with what I owe to my own honour and my father's memory; but not to save the spark of life that binds to this world the enthralled spirit of Cædmon, would I do that which I might deem unworthy—unworthy one who, by his birth, however adverse are his fortunes, stands before you a Saxon thane!' 'Cædmon,' said the King, 'live a Saxon thane; thou art too noble to be an enemy to Richard, who asks no assurance of thy fealty but that which is found in thy honourable breast.'"

"That was kindly said by the king," observed Grace.

"But hear what followed," continued Patch. "'Cædmon,' said Richard, 'it is not yet known to you, though it is to us (the family of De Beaumont being extinct by the death, as we learn, of all of that race), to us, who, in the right of the crown, are become heir to the castle and domain of Wils-worthy,—it is not yet known to you that the Lady Alicia, not long before she retired from the world, addressed to us a letter; she wrote it on hearing of her husband's death, whilst he was on his return to the East. In the full penitence of a contrite heart did she write to us, renounced all her worldly possessions, and having given much of her wealth to the church, prayed that we would forego our rightful claim as sovereign to the Castle of Wils-worthy, and would bestow it on Cædmon, a Saxon youth of noble mind and manners, the grandson of Oswy, once its natural lord, who had forfeited his inheritance

with his life, in a contest in which her late husband, the Lord de Beaumont, was the victor. We were disposed to grant her prayer in thy behalf; but when we learned that thou wast one with Sir Henry de Pomeroy in the attempt to seize the Mount for our late rebel, but now our dear and repentant brother John, we paused ere we decided on putting into thy hands a castle so strong as that of Wilsworthy.' "

"And what said Cædmon to this?" inquired Grace; "this was wise."

"Be patient," replied Patch. "Hear out the matter, and then comment on the manner of it. 'Nevertheless,' said the king, 'we would not determine to condemn thee unheard, as a common traitor. We sent for thee, therefore, Cædmon, to prove thee. Hadst thou been false to thy friend,—hadst thou betrayed him to us either from fear or for reward,—Richard of England would never have put confidence in a betrayer. Never would he have bidden thee, as he now does, henceforth to hold thy father's lands as a true subject to thy king, as constable and thane of Wilsworthy.' "

"It was nobly done," said Grace. "And so this was the end of King Richard's sending for you and Cædmon to the council?"

"The king did not send for me, Grace," replied Patch; "his highness has no need to seek beyond the court for fools or knaves, at any time; and I did not then belong to Cædmon. The king sent only for the Saxon youth, that he might put his truth and courage to the test, as I have said. But you are impatient; if you would but hear me tell out my tale! for I have got the king's speech to my young master by heart, quite as well as the minstrels, who are already turning the whole story into ballads and songs; and it is worth the telling, if you would but hear it to an end."

"I could hear it all day," said Grace, "with true pleasure; for it's just like the stories the minstrels tell round a winter fire blazing with the yule logs. But is it all true?"

"Quite true," replied Patch; "and here is the principal person of it,—that is, next to the king,—at this present time under this very roof, come to visit Sir Henry de Pomeroy."

"Do you know the particulars of the Lord de Beaumont's death?" said Grace.

"Why, thus," replied Patch: "it was soon noised abroad that my Lord de Beaumont, after an absence of seventeen years, during which time he was believed to be dead, had returned to England as a palmer, bound by the most rigid

penitential vows, and that he had vowed never to reveal his name or lineage, till he should have completed his pilgrimages at the Mount of St. Michael on the Eve of St. John. That he did so,—that he saw his wife, who, it seems, had been false to him, many years ago, with the old Lord of Berry Pomeroy, and having bestowed on his lady his forgiveness, he quitted, and for ever, both her and his native land, with the intention to return and end his days in the service of the cross, in Palestine. But that purpose was not permitted to take effect; for, worn in body and mind, and having laboured in his long and severe pilgrimages far beyond his strength, he landed, but so ill, at Jaffa, that he soon after died, declaring he left no heir. He gave much of his possessions to the church, but Wilsworthy he wished might, with the consent of the king, be given to Cædmon, the grandson of that Oswy whom he had slain in battle, and by whose death he had for so many years possessed the lands. It is now said, that before my Lord de Beaumont died, he wrote to his lady, praying her to keep the matter secret; but if ever Richard should return to this kingdom, whilst she was yet alive, that she would intercede with his highness in behalf of Cædmon. But you, Grace, ought to know much more than I can tell of this matter, seeing that you were with the Lady Alicia when she died.”

“I was so,” said Grace; “for, after that dreadful Eve of St. John, which I shall never think upon without breaking my heart,—after that sad night, when the poor dear Lady Adela was drowned, I could not bear St. Michael’s Mount; for I thought I saw nothing but my poor lady floating on every wave that broke against its rocks, and did nothing but hear her cries in every wind that blew. I could not bear my life in that dismal old convent, and so I was glad to get away; and the abbess, who never could abide me, and called me pert jade, let me go freely enough.”

“And did you return then to the Lady Alicia, whilst she was at Market Jew?” inquired Patch.

“Oh, no!” said Grace; “the Lady Alicia, whilst she tarried there, was in the house of one Sampson a Jew; and I did not think it proper for a young Christian woman, as I am, Master Patch, to go to such a place; and so I did not go to my Lady Alicia, till she returned again to Wilsworthy; and she was long sick of a raging fever at the Jew’s.”

“And when she got over it,” said Patch, “it was only to die elsewhere.”

“But she did not die for some months, however,” said

Grace. "She talked of going to end her days as a nun at St. Clare's, in Cornwall; but she was too weak to move from her own castle, when she had once more returned to it; and then letters came to her from over seas, most likely those from her dying lord, but who they came from no one knew but her chaplain. She was very sad, and wept much, yet she could scarcely be more sad than she was before; but soon after she took to her chamber, and thought she should never more hold up her head."

"And then it was, I suppose," said Patch, "she settled her worldly affairs, and wrote that letter which was afterwards delivered to the king, in favour of the noble Cædmon."

"It might have been so," replied Grace; "but I knew nothing of that matter. She gave great sums to the priests for masses to be said for the repose of the soul of the Lady Adela, and of her lord's soul too; and then we all knew, for the first time, that she had learnt he had died in the East. She endowed with rich gifts many a religious house; gave great alms to the poor, and did not forget her household, who had so faithfully served her. All this was right and well; but no sooner was it done, than she seemed all at once lost."

"Because she had no more business to occupy her thoughts with," said Patch.

"Oh, but she had, and such business as none may slight," answered Grace with a sigh, "for she had her peace to make with God; and that was no easy matter, because her conscience was unquiet. She called in priests and holy men, and they shrived her, and did their best. But it was hard work with them, for her mind was bent on the past; she seemed to see nothing but what was gone by; and that only in things which made her wretched, that would not away from her thoughts."

"And did she die with so little comfort?" inquired Patch.

"She died of a broken heart," said Grace, "if ever woman did in this world. For at whiles, when she was feverish and weak, her head would so wander, and she would talk about her child and the sea, and would bid us look out at the window, when the wind blew, and see if it were half tide yet, and if the base of a cross could yet be seen above the waves; and then she would scream, and say a billow had covered it; and then she would wander again, and say that it was her husband who was struggling with the late Lord of Berry Pomeroy in the water, and that the waves changed their colour, and became blood."

"Conscience! Grace," said Patch, shaking his head,—“it was conscience would not let her rest. Well, Grace, to my mind, none so much deserve my cap and bells, as those who are fools to their own quiet, and by wanting wisdom to respect what their conscience tells them, make an unquiet house within, which is the worst of all divided realms.”

“You talk like a priest, I declare, Master Patch, since you have lived with Cædmon the Saxon thane. See what comes of having a master who can read, write, and talk Latin. My Lady Alicia could do all those things, for she was, early in life, intended for an abbess. But I could only talk to her in plain English; and so, when she would sigh, and come to herself, and talk about her sins, I, to quiet her, bade her not to trouble her head about such matters, but to leave them to God, and to try to think only of Father Hilary, who did all he could to comfort her.”

“He was her confessor,” said Patch, “and a worthy man. And pity it was he could not have said something to make her die more happily.”

“Oh, he did at the last!” said Grace; “she made a pious, and, as I may say, an exemplary ending; for finding how anxious she was to die a nun, on her giving a hundred gold byzants to the convent of St. Clare, the prioress sent her a nun’s gown and veil, and Father Hilary put it on her, and caused her to be taken out of bed and carried to the chapel, and laid down before the altar; and she died as they were sprinkling her all over with ashes, and singing the *Nunc Dimittis*.”

“Well, peace be to her memory!” said Patch. “Let us now talk of the living, and of some little matter of my own that I have long wished to say to thee, Grace, but have had no opportunity till now to say it. I have something to ask of thee, my damsel, that thou wilt not deny, I hope, to thy old playfellow, Patch; and truly, those sweet lips look as if they were not formed for denial; and so here is my supplication, made by as true a heart as ever loved maiden——”

Patch’s petition need not be told; and, as Grace, with a little blushing, and a little air of consequence intermixed, that very night informed the housekeeper, who was her superior in the household, she must very shortly leave the castle, as she had thoughts of changing her condition, our readers may infer that Patch, who had long cast a loving eye on the miller’s maid, had not made his petition to her absolutely in vain.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

What equall torment to the grieve of minde,
 And pyning anguish hid in gentle heart,
 That inly feeds itselfe with thoughts unkind,
 And nourisheth her owne consuming smart ?
 What medicine can any leache's art
 Yeeld such a sore, that doth her grievance hide,
 And will to none her maladie impart.

SPENSER.

CÆDMON, on his arrival at Berry Pomeroy, found Sir Henry sunk into the most profound melancholy. He made no complaint of any kind; he scarcely alluded to the past, appeared to have no interest in the future, and hardly seemed to be conscious of the present. He was more as a man who broods over the recollection of past passions, than as one who cherishes any that could disturb his peace anew. So frequent were his fits of abstraction, of silence, and of a solitude that liked to shroud itself in mystery (for Sir Henry hated to have it known in what particular spot of his deep and intricate woods he passed so many hours alone), that it was merely by a word, now and then spoken, he at all alluded to the manner in which he spent his time since his peculiar misfortunes. Yet was it evident to Cædmon, that the recollection of the horrible fate of the Lady Adela, in consequence of De Pomeroy's guilty, yet, in one sense, most innocent affection (for he had never known nor suspected their nearness of kindred till she was dead), was ever present to a mind which, having so long brooded over its own misery, had lost the power to shake it off.

On one occasion, however, the unhappy man mentioned his sister's name; it was when he gave some directions for the completion of a monumental effigy that he designed to place on her tomb, over the spot wherein she was interred, at Tregony in Cornwall.

"Had my dear sister been spared to me," he said to Cædmon, "I should have found a gentle creature to love me, to care for me, in every stage of my being. She would have recognised the brother of her affections under any change; she would have looked on me with sympathy, even as I am now, broken in spirit, worn with suffering; she would have been by friend in life, my solace in death. But she is gone. I will not sorrow for her, she is an angel of light; but rather for myself, who am left alone in a world where I have no consolation, wanting her."

Cædmon, deeply affected by this burst of feeling, the only approach to any strong emotion Sir Henry had evinced since he had been his guest, now endeavoured, in the kindest manner, to soothe his melancholy. There was a manly tenderness in the Saxon youth, as he did so, that was truly amiable; and after suggesting all those themes of comfort, of consolation, that friendship or religion could supply, Cædmon, at length, ventured to advise Sir Henry to quit his present solitary way of life, and to come to him at his more cheerful Castle of Wilsworthy; there might, he fancied, be a soothing influence in a place so consecrated to his affections by the recollections with which it was combined.

De Pomeroy shook his head, and replied—

"No, not there; not at Wilsworthy."

"Where you will, then," said Cædmon, "so that you leave this place; for here you must not stay. Though you are in one of the strongest castles of the West, yet are you careless of its defence. The watch-towers are often unmanned; on the battlements no guard is kept in the night; the gates are frequently left unlocked, till after sundown; and, from your own neglect of your safety, your followers have adopted the idea that you are perfectly secure, and that you have received an assurance of it. You seem to me to live in a manner, as if you were careless of what might become of you, of what might be the result of the king's decision in council respecting those barons, of whom you are one, who have openly rebelled against him, in favour of his brother, the Earl of Mortaigne. The result of the king's judgment is still doubtful. Till, therefore, something is decided, either adopt a necessary precaution to enable you to keep on the defensive within your own castle, or pass over into Normandy, where you have possessions, and tarry there, till these storms shall be overblown, when, you and the princely Richard being reconciled, you may return hither, in the most perfect safety. In the interval,

leave me to intercede with the king to pronounce your pardon."

To this wise counsel De Pomeroy turned a deaf ear. In vain was it that Cædmon set before him the treachery of Prince John to all who had been his partisans in the late unhappy rebellion. Cædmon urged this, in order to prove to his friend that no reliance should be placed on the generosity, gratitude, or forbearance of the Earl of Mortaigne.

As a confirmation of his arguments, he instanced Abbot Baldwin. That wily monk had for some time found great success attend his plans; indeed, he had seemed to be on the eve of accomplishing all his purposes. He had so far gained the encouragement of the pope, in his appeal to Rome, that he was in full expectation of receiving a bull from his holiness, that should end all his quarrels with the Bishop of Exeter, by constituting the abbey of Tavistock as altogether exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, and subject only to the see of Rome.

But the pope, who had, in secret, aided the machinations of the Earl of Mortaigne, whilst Richard was in prison, no sooner found that the lion-hearted monarch was once more returned in safety to wield the sceptre of England, all the aims of Richard's enemies being completely frustrated, than, without delay, he gave up the sinking cause of Prince John, and, in the most zealous manner, renewed his friendship with the gallant king. And, in order to make his court to him more effectual, sacrificed, as one of his first moves towards a change of party, Abbot Baldwin, as a man who had been in league with the Earl of Mortaigne, against that very dear son of the church, Richard, king of England.

It is almost needless to add, that his holiness, in consequence of this, withdrew his countenance from the appeal made to Rome, and left Tavistock abbey still under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Exeter; and its ambitious and subtle abbot to break his heart in the bitterness of a proud, wounded, and disappointed spirit, burning with vain and fruitless desires for revenge.

These things had such an affect, both on his mind and constitution, that Cædmon assured De Pomeroy, Baldwin had died of a frenzy fever, brought on by the combined influence of passions so strong and circumstances so mortifying to a proud spirit. Cædmon further informed Sir Henry, that the abbot, in his mortal part, had been laid to rest in the cloisters of his own monastery, near the tomb of Livingus, in the

odour of sanctity, and most sincerely regretted by all the monks, over whom he had borne his rule with but too indulgent sway.

Baldwin was indeed a loss also to the Saxon school; which, under his auspices, had been revived for the preservation of that ancient tongue. The poor likewise lamented him, for he had ever been liberal in his alms to the old and the infirm; and the high-born and nobles of his neighbourhood regretted most sincerely the loss of an abbot whose learning and accomplished manners made him welcome to the festive halls of every feudal castle. From all these circumstances, it was clear that Abbot Baldwin died more universally deplored and respected than any abbot of his house for many a long year. Yet were his faults of such a nature, that had the heart of the man been as well known to the world at large, as it was to some of his most trusted friends, his very virtues would have been suspected as capable of being influenced, in some degree, by its spirit for evil.

Whence arose these seeming contradictions?—from a very simple cause. Abbot Baldwin had one besetting sin—his ambition; before that god of his idolatry, he had scrupled not to sacrifice every principle of truth or justice, when the object he had in view required it at his hands. Fortunately he died, from disappointment, before he had effected much serious mischief, for his schemes had been rather prepared than brought into action; so that much of his iniquities were known but to those plotters in secret, those wily partisans with whom he had been leagued. Hence was it that his fame suffered less than it deserved; so often is the world deceived in its estimate of public men.

As Cædmon related these circumstances to De Pomeroy, an old chaplain of the castle, who was present, and who had known, but never much respected the abbot, sighed as he said—

“Peace be to his soul! Abbot Baldwin was a proud, an angry, and a subtle man; yet a friend to the poor scholar, and a reviver of learning. To the world he seemed just, for he was wily, and many of his motives of action lay too deep for human ken; they were only to be discovered by Him to whom the thoughts of the heart are always known, by whose sentence not only Abbot Baldwin, but all mankind, will stand or fall at the judgment-day. How many will then find the judgment of man reversed! Some who were held in honour here will be dishonoured there; and not a few, who were

looked upon as the withered branches of the earth, nevertheless, laid up in the ark of mercy, shall, like Aaron's rod, when brought from the sanctuary, blossom anew at the presence of their God."

The old chaplain paused in his discourse, and observing the dejected air of De Pomeroy, implored him to attend more regularly than he had done of late the service of the chapel.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Whereat he smitten was with great affright,
 And trembling terror did his heart apall,
 Ne wist he what to thinke of that same sight,
 Ne what to say, ne what to do at all:
 He doubted least it were some magicall
 Illusion that did beguile his sense,
 Or wandering ghost that wanted funerall,
 Or aery spirite, under false pretence,
 Or hellish feend raysed up through devilish science.

SPENSER.

ON the third day after the arrival of the young Saxon thane, he held again with Sir Henry one of those conversations to which we alluded in our last chapter; still earnestly endeavouring to persuade his friend to pass over into Normandy for a season. Their discourse, succeeded by a melancholy silence, was at length renewed by Cædmon's making some casual remarks on the castle, a part of which had been added to the more ancient buildings by its present possessor, who had also bestowed much attention on the decorations of the chamber in which they sat.

In this apartment there were several portraits: Cædmon, who was a great observer of pictures (having derived his taste for the arts from his old occupation as a scribe and illuminator in the scriptorium of the abbey), noticed one which, he thought, bore a striking resemblance to his friend. He asked whose it was.

"That is the portrait of Sir Ralph de Pomeroy," replied Sir Henry, "the most famed of all our ancient house. He it was who won the banner and the silver spurs from the infidel in the battle of Tours, and received those silver spurs as a token of honour, that should descend to his latest posterity, from the hand of Charles Martel. Do you not observe that he has on his wrist a hawk, the distinction of noble birth; and, in the fingers of the same hand, holds a chain, on which hang a pair of silver spurs? If my portrait were to be placed

with these of my forefathers, alas! Cædmon, I should have no title to more than one spur in my picture; for ours is now but a broken honour, wanting half its credit in the eyes of honest men. De Beaumont won it from us when my unhappy father fell beneath his sword. I dared not adventure its redemption; as, to attempt the recovery of my father's lost token, by an act that would reflect dishonour on myself, was not to be thought upon. I, therefore, still suffer for his offences, though he who offended and he who was injured, have both passed to their account."

"Holy men teach us," said Cædmon, "that the law of God with the Israelites of old is still His law with christian men—that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children."

"They are so, in truth," replied De Pomeroy; "I feel it at this hour; and with me there is no way left to retrieve the ancient glory of our house but by putting on the red cross. Cædmon, I have thought upon thy counsel. I will depart hence ere long, pass over seas, and try if forgetfulness of the past can be purchased by the memory of that duty which we owe to the holy sepulchre."

"Such a purpose," answered Cædmon, "must carry with it the blessing of heaven. There will be comfort, nay, even luxury, in the indulgence of that grief which has been the cause of so much devotion to the holy cross; it will be a sorrow that soothes while it complains. But, oh! do not, do not, noble De Pomeroy, delay to execute your purpose—wherefore should you? Say you were this very night to quit your castle, and I were to remain to see all that may be needful in the ordering of your people; would it not be well? In truth, it would be best for you; and, as soon as I had ordered all things in your castle and in my own, I would join your enterprise in the Holy Land. But do not you delay. Take with you a chosen band, and depart; I know not wherefore I should desire this with so much earnestness, but I do so. Delay not, then, a day nor an hour your departure."

"Cædmon," said Sir Henry, "your importunity hath in it the warrant of friendship. But I will not fly in so much haste from the castle of my forefathers. I neither fear, nor will seem to fear, the power of man, come it from king or people. I fear not even those powers which tradition and credulity say are busy to work evil when any of our race are on the eve of a great peril, a great sorrow, or a sudden death; else might I, perhaps, have been moved by——" he stopped short.

"By what?" exclaimed Cædmon, "speak."

"By nothing," replied Sir Henry; "I will not speak of such follies. There are many idle tales connected with our house; among others, that, ever before the death of a Lord de Pomeroy, he who bears the hawk and the silver spurs in yonder picture, is seen to wander through these halls, to give intimation of his approaching fate. But I credit not such idle stories. Nor do I believe it to be more than a fable, that the blast of a horn, blown by unseen lips, and heard in every part of the old building as distinctly as if but sounded at the threshold of each chamber, ever goes before the visitation of the spectre. These are old wives' tales."

Scarcely had Sir Henry uttered these words, when a long and loud blast of a bugle echoed through court, tower, and hall, and startled even the speaker, so well, or, rather, so ill-timed, did its thrilling sounds come upon his ear.

There was a slight change in Sir Henry's countenance as Cædmon uttered an exclamation of surprise. "It is the huntsman, who thus calls up the castle with his horn," said De Pomeroy. "Shall we forth to the woods, and strike down a dappled deer? I hear the tramp of horses; they are making ready for the chase."

"Those sounds are not the sounds of horses equipped for the chase," said Cædmon; "for, hark! I hear the clash of arms. The bugle sounds again; it is without the castle gates. Who can it be, who thus comes in the array of arms? Sir Henry, shall I go forward to the ward, and order the men to lower the portcullis, that we may talk with these newcomers, ere they cross your gates?"

"Not so," replied Sir Henry; "have I not already said that I will not fear? I will summon Eustace, our body squire, and will send him to bring us tidings."

He did so, and Eustace soon after returned.

"A herald from King Richard," said Eustace; "he comes to greet Sir Henry de Pomeroy at his castle of Berry Pomeroy; he comes with a guard of archers, and wears a tabard; shall I give him entrance?"

"Marshal him hither with all honour," said Sir Henry. "But he is here already; he has followed hard upon your steps."

The herald entered: he wore a tabard embroidered with lions in gold; his staff of office was in his hand. He was followed by a guard that wore the royal badges, and proclaimed they belonged to the king.

On seeing the herald, De Pomeroy started, and even recoiled some paces at his approach.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "Sir Geoffrey de Malduit! what may his presence augur in my good castle?"

"Even what thou wilt," replied Geoffrey, with his accustomed unperturbed effrontery. "Sir Henry de Pomeroy, I come into thy presence on the service of King Richard. In me you see not Geoffrey de Malduit, but the herald of our liege lord: respect, therefore, my commission, if you respect not the person of him who bears it. I am bound on a duty which, in the king's name, compels me to visit every castle of the West, wherein those barons have enclosed themselves within their walls, who have hitherto stood aloof from King Richard since his return home. I come to look on the order and number of your men, the state of your castle; truly there seems no disposition to resist his highness's pleasure, for your gates opened to me, the royal herald, on the first summons. This is well: I ask of you, therefore, Sir Henry, but hospitality for myself and my people: we are travellers on our way, and shall not long trouble you."

"Sir Geoffrey de Malduit," said Sir Henry, sternly, as he withdrew his hand, on seeing the herald stretch forth his in courtesy, folded his arms across his breast, and looked on him with a proud scorn, "Sir Geoffrey de Malduit, there can be no fellowship between thee and me. As you come wearing the tabard of England's king, and in the name of Richard, against whose right and power I take all here present to witness, I make no resistance, you shall have all respect and honour paid to you in this castle. In the king's name you may command here; and by the authority of that name, I and mine will obey. You have required my hospitality for you and yours as wayfarers. Take it and welcome; the hospitality of a De Pomeroy was never yet required in vain. It shall be extended towards you with no niggard hand. Thus much have I spoken as due to the king's highness, and to the honour of the lord of this castle. Now, hear me in my own individual person, as Henry de Pomeroy, addressing himself to a sworn knight, hear me—for it is he who now speaks."

Malduit bowed; and Sir Henry continued,—“Thy time here accomplished, on the king's mission, thy band and thyself quit from my halls; thy herald's coat off thy back; and thou once more denuded of thy ill-merited royal honours, and no more left of thee than stands acknowledged in the ungarnished person of Geoffrey de Malduit; once more, in such thy natural state, why then will I defy thee, as I do now, to a mortal combat at arms, as base, cowardly, and false-hearted;

and in proof of my defiance, I here throw down my glove in gage of battle. Wilt thou underlay my challenge? yea or nay?"

Geoffrey de Malduit turned white with passion; he compressed his lips, drew his breath inwardly, kept silence, paused a minute, and then with the most perfect calm, as if no strong passion had for a moment shaken his bosom, said in a careless manner, as he took up the glove — "Geoffrey de Malduit stoops to take up the gage of thy scorn, Sir Henry; in what way it may be best answered, we will settle ere we part. In the interval, we will suspend all feuds, and do what we can to do credit to the hospitality of Berry Pomeroy, offered with so much courtesy, — with so much honour to the temper of its valiant and gracious lord."

This was spoken in a manner that neither Sir Henry nor Cædmon could immediately decide, if it were intended in earnest or in mockery; the exercise of a sarcastic humour being the nearest approach to the cheerful that was ever witnessed in Geoffrey de Malduit in a social or domestic circle. That an habitual sneerer should sneer, even when he wanted to appear courteous, was therefore no matter of surprise; and as he took up the glove, and placed it in his girdle in proof that he really accepted the challenge, no one present doubted his sincerity in this particular. For the rest, his conduct, during the three days he remained at Berry Pomeroy, was such as we shall now proceed to relate as briefly as possible.

Sir Henry, with that liberality of spirit which characterized most of the old English barons, was studious that no charge should, with reason, be made against his hospitality. He, therefore, in the best manner he was able, continued to entertain Sir Geoffrey de Malduit, styling him, on all occasions, the herald of his highness the king. On the first day, he caused the hart hounds to be led forth for his amusement, and a fat buck was stricken, and feasted upon in the castle halls. On the second there was hawking; and on the third and last, a tilting at the quintain in the castle court. On each day the banquet was served, the wine-cup sparkled with the richest wines of France and Gascony, and the harper rang forth the full and varied chords of his harp, as he sang many a minstrel rhyme; nor did Cædmon refuse to touch its strings, as he once more awakened its melody for the gratification of the melancholy De Pomeroy.

Thus passed the time. On the morrow (the day appointed for his departure), Sir Geoffrey de Malduit declared it was his

intention to go forward to Dartmouth Castle; yet, when the morrow came, he changed his purpose, he said he would rest one night more at Berry Pomeroy. It was the Eve of St. John.

"The Eve of St. John!" exclaimed De Pomeroy, for he did not, till that moment, recollect the memorable anniversary that had been so fatal to his peace. A deep sigh stole from his bosom, and such a sadness came over his countenance that Cædmon, who watched him with the eye of the fondest affection, saw that the recollection of what had passed on the last Eve of St. John had completely overcome his spirits; and he rather favoured than opposed some slight excuse De Pomeroy made in the evening, to steal away from his guests, at an early hour after supper. Sir Henry left them in the banqueting hall, just as the minstrels came in with their harps.

De Pomeroy passed into the chamber we have before noticed, where hung the pictures. No lamp was there burning; but the moon, for it was a most beautiful moonlight, fell in mild and cold radiance through the long, narrow, and shafted windows of the apartment. Tempted by the fineness of the night, De Pomeroy was induced, without asking himself the motive, to indulge his feelings, at such an hour, amid the stillness and the solemnity of nature.

The moon was high in the heavens; only a few fleecy clouds, edged and touched with her silvery light, floated above the woods, now partially illumined by her beams, whilst the surrounding shadows were softened and mellowed into harmony. The little river brawled along the woods at the foot of the precipice on the eastern side of the castle: it was now gleaming with the radiance of the moonlight that trembled on the long line of its musical and flowing waters. The towers of Berry Pomeroy stood erect on the summit of the hill, in the solemnity of silence and of night. No sentinel was on the ramparts of this part of the building; the moon alone silvered their turreted tops; they looked cold and white as marble in its beams.

We have said that the terrace overlooked the north-east. It was there that De Pomeroy now stood, contemplating the placid and beautiful scene that lay before him. It was of a kind fitted for the indulgence of that calm and solemn spirit of melancholy, which the sight of the majestic in nature, touched and characterized with a degree of mystery arising from the half seen, half defined forms of moonlight, never fails to present to the imagination. And, as whatever is

mysterious more or less connects itself with images of high and holy things, the still hour of the night, the silvery lights and softened shadows of moonlight, are peculiarly adapted to raise in the mind a sense of awe, which, when combined with the power of fancy, brings, as it were, before the sight the spirits of another world.

If the deep repose of the hour, the silence that reigned around, or the fancy, always potent under such circumstances, might be the occasion of what we have to relate; or if it were merely an idle tale, or something too real for feelings of flesh and blood to witness unappalled, we will not say. But such was the strange event we have to record, that he who witnessed it believed it real, and in that belief, felt, what he had never done before, a sense of fear, mingled with an awful presentiment that it was for no common purpose, for no common errand, that this thing was permitted at such a time and place.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy had retraced his steps to the farthest end of the terrace, and was passing under the shadow of a tower that led to another part of the castle, when he fancied he saw something move in the dusky obscurity that lay before him. He paused,—looked again,—saw it move forward in the direction he was about to take.

He spoke,—he demanded who might be there? No answer was returned. Suddenly there was a rushing sound, as if something swept close by him. He looked again; he saw nothing. He once more fixed his eyes on the path he had just passed over, and determined to retrace his steps. He now beheld a tall and shadowy figure, that seemed to stand motionless in the direct line of path he was about to pursue, still somewhat obscured by the shade of the castle wall, that extended along the whole length of the terrace which lay at its foot, the terrace itself being alone bounded by the precipice above the rocks, river, and woods, that lay at its base.

A thrill of feeling, of interest, not unallied to superstitious dread, determined Sir Henry to follow and overtake the figure that refused to answer to his repeated calls. He advanced; the figure did the same, and glided on before him, but not with a motion that seemed natural to one who walks the earth. Though he followed close, De Pomeroy could not overtake his extraordinary visitant. At length he pursued him to the very centre of the terrace, where but a moment before there had been the brightest light; but now there was obscurity, for a cloud had crossed the moon's disk and veiled

her splendid light. It passed away, leaving her "unclouded in majesty" as before.

The light fell in its clearest, fullest radiance on the terrace. De Pomeroy rushed forward; here he must come upon the intruder, for there were but a few paces between himself and the figure on the one side, and the precipice on the other. The figure in an instant turned to confront him; De Pomeroy saw him face to face, and by the light of the moon, which was but a little paler than that of day, but as "the daylight sick," he saw him, and felt a cold shudder creep through every vein, as he recognised in the red mantle, the hawk on the wrist, and the silver spurs, depending from the chain, held in the right hand, the death-like and fixed countenance, the figure of that De Pomeroy represented in the picture, to whose visitations in this world so fearful a portent was annexed.

An exclamation, in a tone high and shrill, escaped the lips of the terrified De Pomeroy, as he made a rush to lay his hand upon the figure. It eluded his grasp; he saw it dart forward, but he saw it no more. He had courage enough, even in such a moment as this, to advance to the very edge, and to look down the precipice. There he saw nothing but the black and yawning gulf that lay before him. Confused, astonished, doubting the evidence of his own senses, shaken and assaulted by fears he had never before known, he rushed back to the castle, scarcely seeming to feel the ground over which he passed.

The first person he encountered in the ante-room was Cædmon; the flush of anger was on his cheek, his brow was knit, he seemed shaking with passion.

"What has chanced, Cædmon?" inquired De Pomeroy, on meeting.

"I have quarreled with Geoffrey de Malduit, that is all," replied Cædmon; "he has insulted me over his cups; and, more than that—But, merciful heaven! what has chanced to you, Sir Henry? you tremble, and your countenance is as pale as that in the old faded picture of Sir Ralph de Pomeroy, whom, I think, I never before saw you so much resemble, now that you look pale as he. What has happened?"

"What you will not believe, Cædmon," replied De Pomeroy. "I have seen him!—nay, start not,—the spectre of Ralph de Pomeroy *has* crossed my path,—it is no fancy. As there is truth in heaven or on earth,—by the word of a knight, I speak sooth. *Like him, dost thou say?* may be I shall be more like him still, even as he is now, ere many moons are waned; for

the spectre, if our nurses speak truth, never yet came on a false errand to the Castle of De Pomeroy."

"If it bodes evil, it has spoken truth already, and evil enough for this night," said Cædmon; "for that Geoffrey de Malduit meditates some injury to thee, I am certain; it is on this ground that we have quarreled."

"How! what does he meditate? and wherefore didst thou, Cædmon, take up my quarrel with such a craven; one whom I have reserved to chastise with my own sword, in due time and place, but not under my own roof."

"I could not do other," said Cædmon. "No sooner had you left the hall, unobserved by Geoffrey, than he inquired where you were gone; and said that he had bethought him, he ought not so to linger on his way. He must therefore leave the castle suddenly, as this night. He had considered it would be better to do so, than in the broad eye of day, on the morrow. To depart by night would draw less observation on him and his band. He then talked apart with them; and I most distinctly heard him give orders that your horse should be saddled, and made ready as soon as the horses of his own people; and then turning to me, with an air of insolence, he bade me go and seek you out, as if I had been his page, or his serving varlet. At insolence such as this, I could not keep my temper; and on my telling him it was the height of presumption in him to order your horse to be made ready for a journey, in your own castle, without your permission, he gave me a reply so insolent that we had high words upon it. Yet I so far governed myself, that I forbore to push our quarrel to any extremity, lest I should lose the opportunity to leave the hall to warn you of these matters, and bid you beware; as Geoffrey de Malduit is in a mood both insolent and dangerous,—there is malice in his heart. I saw the spirit of a fiend lurk in his dark and villanous eye. If you can avoid him, do so."

"I will not," said De Pomeroy; "I will avoid no man under my own roof. I have done him no wrong; and I would face him if he were tenfold more a Malduit than he is. His Norman name speaks the quality of his mind truly enough."

"Be not rash," said Cædmon; "if you can avoid him, let me pray you to do so. I do entreat, if you have ever loved me as your friend, for my sake, if not for your own, to forbear him; for he is this night both malicious and dangerous, or never was there malice or danger in the heart of a wicked man. I feel assured it is so."

De Pomeroy made no reply, but followed by Cædmon, passed forward. It was with a mind greatly excited, wrought to the highest pitch of displeasure, and prepared to feel with more than ordinary passion the insolence of De Malduit, that Sir Henry now encountered him in the great hall, where they had previously supped.

As they met, their looks spoke defiance; those of Malduit wore an expression that was almost demoniacal. He had deliberately contemplated and worked himself up to the execution of a deed of the most cold-blooded treachery of which the still-existing records of his age bear testimony. For after having been, as we have shewn, for three days entertained in the most hospitable manner by his destined victim (who was wholly unsuspecting of such treachery), at his castle of Berry Pomeroy, Malduit reserved for the last night of his sojourn there, the execution of the very purpose which had brought him to its gates.

Immediately, therefore, on seeing De Pomeroy, he drew from his vest a parchment, unrolled it, and shewed it was a warrant from Richard in council, to arrest Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as a traitor, for having been in league with the partisans of the Earl of Mortaigne in the late insurrections in various parts of the kingdom, and more especially in the West.

To describe the indignation which now filled the bosom of De Pomeroy would be impossible. Cædmon also felt so indignant that he drew his sword, as he endeavoured to rush from the hall with the intent to rouse the people of Sir Henry, in the hope to deliver him from the power of his enemies, though the vassals of De Pomeroy were far less in number than those of De Malduit. Cædmon, however, was disarmed, and detained, but with the assurance that no harm should be done to him, for it was well known to all present, that the young Saxon thane was in favour with the king. In vain did Cædmon endeavour by entreaty, by remonstrance with those who held him apart, to free himself from their grasp, that he might fly to the support of his betrayed and unhappy friend.

Malduit now offered to lay hands on De Pomeroy, who became almost frantic with passion at this repeated insult.

"Off, off!" he exclaimed; "lay no hands on me; I will not endure thy pernicious touch; for thou, Geoffrey de Malduit, evil in thy race and in thy nature,—thou art too vile to approach one who bears the character or feelings of a man. Thou art callous to all reproach; for thou hast no conscience that could be roused to blush for thine own villany. For

three days hast thou been under my roof, honourably entertained as a herald of the king, and yet as such, ere thou wouldst now quit my castle walls, for the first time dost thou let me know the purpose that brought thee to them; and that my hospitality is to be requited by arresting me as a traitor; and that too when I did not for an instant bar my gates against the king's power in thy person. But thou hast neither honour nor humanity in thy soul, else thou wouldst have delayed even this last act of thy baseness till the morrow; thou wouldst not have executed it on the Eve of St. John: a time that all who know Henry de Pomeroy, know well enough is to him of fearful recurrence: a day that can never be blotted from his memory."

Malduit seemed to exult; it seemed as if in the extremity of his malice, he derived a new pleasure from finding he had consummated the misery of the unhappy De Pomeroy, on the anniversary of a day so marked by calamity, by suffering to his feelings. The wretch laughed in the brutality of his triumph, as he said, alluding to the circumstance of Adela being the sister of Sir Henry when he knew not that she was such—"Yes, the last Eve of St. John was marked by a godly pilgrimage of thine; to seize the Mount like a traitor to thy sovereign prince, and to steal thine own sister from her cell, when she had taken up her abode at St. Michael's, to hide her dishonour and thine from all the world."

At the hearing of this most false, most unjust and cruel taunt thrown on the memory of his blameless sister, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, without a pause to draw breath enough to give utterance to his indignation, fell a few paces back, drew his dagger, rushed on De Malduit, and buried the weapon up to the very haft, in the treacherous heart of this tyrant in insolence and office. The sturdy wretch rolled at his feet, uttered a faint groan, and expired.

To paint the scene that followed would be impossible. The followers of De Malduit gathered round the body; raised it, whilst they vainly essayed to find some sign of lingering life. All were so much engaged that at the instant and for some time after, not one of them observed Sir Henry de Pomeroy had fled from the hall, and that Cædmon had followed him.

Cædmon had, indeed, followed with the most anxious purpose, to prevent if possible, all further mischief, amidst such turbulent and unruly men and passions. In vain, however, did he now interfere; in vain did he endeavour to learn from

Sir Henry what might be his purpose. He hoped that De Pomeroy had fled from the hall to call up his vassals to stand by him at this extremity, in defence of their lord in his own castle.

But it was all in vain; there was an air of wildness, amounting to frenzy (no doubt it was the effect of a temporary madness brought on by the impassioned and excited state of his feelings), in the demeanour, the looks, the words of De Pomeroy. He gazed on Cædmon as he spoke, as if he neither heard nor comprehended what he said. He walked in rapid strides to the court-yard of the castle. There he saw his own horse, standing equipped, ready for his master, as Geoffrey de Malduit had directed, when he had resolved on that evening to put in force the warrant of arrest, and to remove De Pomeroy from his own castle under cover of night, and as a prisoner in his especial charge.

On seeing the horse, Sir Henry's consciousness appeared to return,—his disturbed demeanour became more calm; still there was an air of wildness in his looks and manner, as he pointed to the horse, and said,—

“Cædmon, Cædmon, do you remember that animal?”

Cædmon, who guessed the thought which had suggested these words, would not say he did; he remained, therefore, silent.

“I rode that creature,” said De Pomeroy, “on the last fatal Eve of St. John. I placed on its back my unhappy sister, lost—lost, and by my means! Is it not, Cædmon,” he said, (as a bitter laugh burst from his lips, the laugh of ‘moody madness’)—“is it not the very animal that I should mount this night?” and, so saying, he leapt on the gallant charger's back.

“What do you mean, Sir Henry?” said Cædmon, affrighted by the wild eagerness of his looks: “where will you go?”

“Where go?” cried Sir Henry, and another laugh, that curdled the blood, and was even yet more appalling than the former, shocked Cædmon as it met his ear, for in it he recognised the laugh of absolute frenzy. “Where man shall have no power to wreak his will on De Pomeroy. Thinkest thou, Cædmon, that when yonder carrion is cast forth to the dogs, that I shall be pardoned having made the base wretch fit to banquet them and the worms? No; I am already called traitor,—murderer will be now my title of addition, and I shall die as a murderer dies, by the hand of the public executioner. But this shall never be: spirit of my forefathers, I thank thee,

—thou hast marshaled me the way. On! my good horse, on! Farewell, Cædmon, thou only true friend, farewell! On! my brave steed, on!—knowest thou not this is the Eve of St. John, the eve on which she perished?—Adela—my sister—thy death is requited now!”

So saying he looked up to heaven, as if gazing on something in the upper air; then gave the rein to his horse, and struck with his heels his sides; the noble animal, used to obey the least motion of his rider, dashed forward, but not in the direction towards the gates of the castle. Cædmon saw him turn the creature's head towards the terrace. The young Saxon followed with the foot of a fawn more than of a man for swiftness. But it was too late: De Pomeroy had gained the terrace. The instinct of the horse had resisted all his rider's efforts to make him leap the precipice; till, tearing off the short cloak he wore, Sir Henry threw it over the animal's eyes, and in another second both horse and rider had passed the fearful gulf, and lay dead at its base.

Years, even centuries, have rolled away since this occurrence took place at Berry Pomeroy Castle; but not even at this distance of time could the writer of these pages visit the spot, without feeling a shudder as she stood on the fatal terrace, and looked down the precipice which tradition still points out as having been that of the fearful death of the gallant, though erring Sir Henry de Pomeroy, so soon after the return of the lion-hearted Richard to this realm of England.

NOTES.

CAREW, in his Survey of Cornwall, says, "Henry de la Pomeroy lived at, and was lord of Berry Pomeroy, in this county. This Henry taking heart at the imprisonment of Richard the First by Leopoldus, Duke of Austria, surprised and expelled the monks out of Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, that there he might be a petty prince by himself. But, being ascertained of his sovereign's enlargement, and fearing deserved death, to prevent it, he laid violent hands on himself, as Roger Hoveden doth report. But the descendants from this Pomeroy made a different relation of this accident; affirming, that, a serjeant-at-arms of the king's came to his castle at Berry Pomeroy, and there received kind entertainment for certain days together, and at his departure was gratified with a liberal reward: in counterchange whereof he then, and no sooner, revealed his long concealed errand, produced a warrant, and flatly arrested his host, to make his immediate appearance before the king, to answer to a capital crime; which unexpected and ill carried message De Pomeroy took in such despite, that with his dagger he stabbed the messenger to the heart. Then, despairing of pardon in so superlative an offence, he abandoned his home, and got himself to his sister, abiding in the island of Mount St. Michael's, in Cornwall. Here he bequeathed a large portion of his land to religious people dwelling there, to pray for the redeeming of his soul; and lastly (that the remainder of his estate might descend to his heir), he caused himself to be let blood unto death."

Prince's account differs somewhat from the above in a few particulars. I give the following from his Worthies of Devon: "Sir Henry de la Pomerai, being a man of war, as his character is, adhered unto John, Earl of Moretain and Cornwall, against King Richard, being then in the Holy Land, and in behalf of the said John, expelled the monks out of Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, and fortified the same. There is a different account given of this matter, the whole of which, as laid down on both sides, I shall faithfully relate as I find it. Some say this gentleman had taken some great disgust at King Richard the First; probably because that king had seized his lands for coming into England without his leave, and exacted of him a fine of seven hundred marks for the livery of them again. Hereupon, when the said king (coming from his noble exploits in the Holy Land) was imprisoned in Germany by Leopoldus Duke of Austria, taking heart thereat, he surprised St. Michael's Mount aforesaid, and expelled the monks from thence, after which he fortified it for his defence and safety; or (as one tells us), that there he might be a petty prince by himself. Howbeit, soon after, being ascertained of his sovereign's enlargement, the very fear of ensuing harm wrought in him a present effect of the utmost that any harm could bring, and that was death. So Hollingshed writeth, that after he had took St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, hearing of King Richard's return, he died with thought, or as another expresseth it, with grief; whereupon the old cell and new forts were surrendered to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the king's behalf." The second story, respecting the arrest of the sergeant-at-arms, and de Pomeroy stabbing him, etc., Prince gives from Carew. But the *traditionary* tale, in its close, is far more romantic and appalling than even that which avers that De Pomeroy caused himself to be bled to death.

TRADITION says that, after having stabbed to the heart the treacherous and ungrateful villain who had been so hospitably entertained at his castle for four days, when in the act to arrest him, De Pomeroy, despairing of pardon from the king, mounted his horse, and riding furiously to the back of his castle, compelled the animal to leap from the lofty terrace into the gulph below, where horse and horsemen were both killed on the spot.

Another legend avers, that when the castles of the great barons were ordered to be dismantled, two members of the De Pomeroy race refused compliance, and rather than yield preferred a voluntary death by spurring their horses from off

the terrace of their ancient castle. Both found a grave beneath its lofty and castle-crowned rock.

Gilbert, in his History of Cornwall, states, that when De Pomeroy and his followers surprised St. Michael's Mount, they disguised themselves by wearing the gowns and cloaks of pilgrims over their armour—so they crossed the isthmus, and so they gained their footing on the Mount, when suddenly throwing off their disguise, they drew their swords, and obtained possession of the place.

Black Shields and *Smitten Hart Lane* are both places so called on the Manor of Cudlipp town, the property of the Rev. E. A. Bray, on the borders of Dartmoor; their very remarkable names alone suggested the incidents which are made to occur in those localities.

In the Rev. Mr. Oliver's account of the Abbots of Tavistock, Baldwin is named as having been the superior of the extensive monastery of the Benedictines in that town, at the date of my story. I therefore introduced him, though nothing but his name appears in the Rev. Mr. Oliver's account. The dispute which I have made to occur between Abbot Baldwin and the Bishop of Exeter, when the former appeals to Rome, and pleads that his house is "the exempt Monastery of Tavistock," gives, I believe, no unfaithful picture of those disagreements, which frequently arose to quarrels of the most serious nature, between the abbots and the bishops in these kingdoms. The following extract from Mr. Oliver's curious work, will be sufficient to prove that I am not without warrantry for the dispute between the superior of our abbey and the episcopal see in my tale.

"This abbot (Richard Banham,) was cited 15th April, 1513, to appear before Dr. Richard Collet, the bishop's commissioner, to answer to the charge of contempt of episcopal authority. The abbot, instead of explaining the occasion of his conduct or offering any apology, produced a written appeal to the Roman court. The appeal was declared by the commissioners to be frivolous and inadmissible. For his obstinacy the abbot was suspended that very day; and on the 22d of the same month was excommunicated '*propter multiplicem contumaciam*.' On the 10th of May, he appeared in person before Bishop Oldham, at the palace of Exeter, and on his bended knees, most humbly and most earnestly entreated to be absolved from his censures; and offered to submit himself unconditionally to the bishop's correction. The bishop then tendered the oath of submission to the see of Exeter, and after

he had taken it, absolved him from his censures, whereupon the abbot paid him down five pounds of gold. The repentance of the abbot seems to have been insincere; for soon after he appealed to the primate, William Warham, and to Richard Fitz-James, bishop of London. The question chiefly turned on the right of episcopal visitation, The prelates decided on the 8th of February following, that the abbot had not produced any indults, bulls, or vouchers authorizing any exemption from the jurisdiction of the ordinary; they therefore decreed that he and his convent should submit to this regularly constituted authority, as their predecessors had done from time immemorial: they recommended the abbot to apply to the bishop (Oldham) for the benefit of absolution; and they directed the bishop to confer it without hesitation, and to treat the abbot with mildness and paternal affection." So far Oldham's register.

This abbot was not discouraged by defeat. From the primate he appealed to the court of Rome; and at last succeeded in obtaining from Leo X., a bull of such ample and extraordinary privileges, as completely to indemnify him for his former expenses and defeat. This bull is dated 14th September, 1517. It expressly exempts the abbey of Tavistock, with its several dependencies, from all archiepiscopal and all episcopal jurisdiction, visitation and superiority, and takes it and them under the sole and immediate protection of the holy see. It declares that all suspensions, interdicts, and excommunications pronounced against them by any other authority than that of the see apostolic, are absolutely null and void.

As an acknowledgment for such sweeping liberality, the abbot was annually to pay to the apostolic chamber, on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, half an ounce of gold, *i. e.* twenty shillings of lawful money of Great Britain."

The ordeal of bread and cheese, as being peculiar to the monks, is mentioned by Henry, in his History of England. Many of the customs, and the duties of the officials, their privileges, etc., of the monks of the monastery of Tavistock, as introduced in the romance, are founded on the authority of that most learned and judicious antiquary, the Rev. Mr. Fosbroke.

In the year 1836, in company with Mr. Bray, I visited the most interesting points of the county of Cornwall, and was particularly struck with St. Michael's Mount, the bay, etc.: from the impression I then received, I endeavoured to describe them. In walking across the causeway, which leads from

Marazion (anciently called Market Jew, on account of the number of Jews there residing for the purpose of traffic,) to the Mount, and which is alone passable at low water, we observed the broken base of what had once supported a very ancient stone cross of Saxon date. This vestige is in so ruinous a state, and so surrounded by the stones forming the causeway, that it was by a fortunate chance alone that I observed it, as we walked slowly over the slippery path. I was struck with it; and my curiosity being excited, I found by a reference to Gilbert's History of Cornwall, that it must be the base of the identical stone cross, erected in the time of Edward the Confessor, and which at high tide arose with great majesty above the waters. It must have had a most singular and imposing effect. After standing uninjured, through the tempests of so many centuries, in a storm of more than ordinary violence, it was at length swept away about ninety years ago. I could fancy in the mind's eye, the whole scene, the Mount of St. Michael, crowned by its ancient castle, and its convent, the sea rising in angry waves between that mount and the mainland, and the cross, the signal of hope, rising unmoved, above the stormy and struggling waters. The picture thus presented to my own fancy, suggested to me the scene where the ocean cross of St. Michael's Mount is made the great object of interest, towards the conclusion of Henry de Pomeroy.

THE END.



THE WHITE ROSE.

THE WHITE ROSE.

A TALE FOUNDED ON FACT.

I was myself very young, when, at one of the first private balls which I ever attended, I saw two young ladies, who on that evening formed the principal objects of attraction to all present. They were sisters; both endowed with a more than ordinary share of beauty and of grace; yet the marked difference in the character of their charms had procured for them, among their intimate friends and acquaintances, the names of the White and Red Roses.

The eldest sister, Martha, had a fine Madonna cast of features, with light hair, and a fair and pale complexion so exquisite in its purity, that not the flower after which she was thus poetically named could exceed its delicacy. Very opposite to this style of beauty was that of her younger sister, Catherine. Her face, less regular in its features, was of a more joyous and animated character, and always presented the brightest glow of health, as if it had been fanned into crimson by the mountain winds. Such was the Red Rose; but my story principally relates to her fairer and gentler sister.

These young ladies were the daughters of a London merchant, of great respectability, but moderate fortune, whose whole soul was placed in commerce and in what way to turn every thing to profit, in respect to worldly gain. His very daughters were loved by him very much like his money-bags, as a marketable commodity, to be disposed of at the highest interest, and to the best bidder. His wife was of a character differing from his own in most points, save the love of money; in that their union was complete—they were, indeed, as one.

Yet with all this worldly-mindedness she was considered by her family and friends, and probably by herself, as very religious, being a follower of one of the most noted and stern sectarian leaders of her day—a great formalist, who set an almost exclusive value on outward observances. In other respects she was no less austere than arbitrary, and brought up her daughters with a severity the most injudicious, as neither of them dared, under any circumstances, to confide in her.

As they grew up, she was no less unwise in matters of indulgence than she had hitherto been in those of discipline, since she too early led them into scenes of the most thoughtless dissipation, with a view that, in such, they might as soon as possible find opportunities to make their fortunes; for as both daughters were endowed with personal attractions of a very uncommon kind, and, added to these, the usual accomplishments of playing, singing, dancing, etc. neither herself nor her husband were slow to entertain the opinion that the girls might marry very well—that is, very wealthily. I must not omit adding, that their mother regularly took them to chapel, where they learnt all that could be learnt of the stern and the formal in doctrine from the forbidding preacher; but of that true and only religion, which has its abiding-place in the heart, they knew little or nothing, having few opportunities of acquiring any knowledge of it, either at the meeting or at home, by the force of example.

With a view to the advancement alluded to above, the young ladies were dressed, decorated, and introduced to the best society the station and fortune of their parents could command for them, and they soon became the admired of all admirers at many of the grand assemblies and parties given by some of the most considerable London merchants; and were even mentioned in the newspapers as among the most striking beauties of the evening, on their first appearance at the Mansion-house ball.

Catherine, the younger sister, highly enjoyed all this. She laughed, danced, sang, and flirted with that genuine delight, so common to the young, who enter on such scenes of pleasure and dissipation, when they find in themselves sufficient powers of attraction to add a new charm to that society whence their own enjoyment is derived.

With Martha, however, at the period of which I am now speaking, it was different. Although she was not altogether insensible to the admiration she excited wherever she appeared,

it neither dazzled her imagination nor gratified her wishes. Mere admiration was not enough to satisfy the yearnings of a heart so profound in its feelings, so affectionately susceptible as hers. She felt she was formed for better things than the mere amusements of an idle hour; and that the possession of one heart that could understand and respond to her own, in all its warm and generous emotions, would be of more worth, a greater triumph, than the thousand vain conquests which attend the steps of beauty in the height of its career. Martha was worthy of a better education, and a better example, than she had found at home. She was, though of gentle manners, possessed of strong passions and acute feelings; yet naturally so amiable, so amenable to reason and affection, that had she been more fortunate in her training, it would have produced none of that rashness and impetuosity which even thus early distinguished her; for, having never known any other than the rule of terror, she was but too reckless as to the means of escaping from it.

Martha loved Catherine; but the younger was not of a character to enter into the feelings of her elder sister. She only laughed at what she called Martha's visions of romance, instead of sympathising with her, and wondered, when they had so many opportunities of seeing the gayest company, why Martha could not enjoy it as much as she did herself; wondered when she sighed for what she called better things. Could there be anything better than the Mansion-house balls? or the parties on the Thames, when they dined at Richmond, and there danced on the green with the nicest partners, and had the most delightful band? But in Martha there was that keen susceptibility which discovers itself in such quick resentments of trifles, as would pass unnoticed by minds of an order less refined than her own. A susceptibility like this is often the accompaniment of strong feelings, and a consciousness of a higher order of talents, and more elevated pursuits. Martha revolted from the familiar approach of common characters and minds; she liked not to be led out to the dance by every one who chose to ask her hand for it; she felt it as an offence not only to her pride, but to her delicacy, when any one of the idlers or coxcombs who were present presumed to address her in the language of compliments and admiration; she felt as if that veil of reserve which the dignity of woman had caused her to throw between herself and the world at large was rudely torn aside, when such persons addressed to her flatteries that, by the very act of intruding them, they had the presumption to conclude must

be welcome. It not unfrequently happened that Martha's slighted admirers turned their complimentary attentions to her sister Catherine, who never repelled them with either the frown of anger or the coldness of indifference; and after the evening was over, the good-natured Kate would often lament to her sister that she treated so proudly every man who approached her, and feared she must give pain to many who meant well. On these occasions of good-humoured reproof, Martha generally remained silent, as she knew that her thoughts and feelings were so different to Catherine's, that they were to her as a language which she could not understand. Yet one language they shared in common between them with the fullest feeling and comprehension; and that was, the ardent expressions which arose from the promptings of the sincerest and kindest sisterly affection.

Martha had scarcely completed her eighteenth year, when amongst the many suitors her beauty and accomplishments had attracted around her, one presented himself, or rather was presented to her by her father, as a gentleman most acceptable to her parents, and to whom they had promised her hand.

This suitor, so suddenly and peremptorily offered for her acceptance, was a man of reputed great wealth, and, even as his intended father-in-law, one of that honourable body, the merchants of London, with whom his name and credit stood high. His commerce was large and established, his talents for business first-rate, and his prudence as unquestionable as his notes and bills, that were as safe as those of the Bank of England. This gentleman had also been the first towards establishing some English company in foreign parts, that was, it was said, to be the means of enriching all who were fortunate enough to obtain shares in the concern.

Martha's dismay on finding this man destined for her by her parents, even before the proposal was named to herself, was beyond all description. She knew and dreaded the violent exercise of that arbitrary power with which she should have to contend, did she attempt the slightest opposition to will so determined and authority so absolute. Yet she never could consent to be the wife of this man, for he was her aversion. Not only was he old enough to be her father, but was, in all respects, unsuited to her character, her habits, and her taste; of stern and forbidding manners, selfish, and altogether disagreeable both in person and mind.

Emboldened by her sense of misery at the very thoughts of such a union, she ventured to tell her parents how great was

her abhorrence of their choice, and hinted even sufficient of the truth to the suitor himself as would have caused him to give over his suit, had he been of a character capable of the least generosity or delicacy of feeling. But all her efforts were in vain; all her objections were treated either as trivial, or as the mere results of maiden modesty, and of a perverseness of disposition that was opposed to her own good. At length, wearied with her remonstrances, her parents adopted a system of domestic tyranny and persecution that had no parallel that I have ever heard of in real life; and in fiction, only in the sufferings of a *Clarissa Harlowe*, in order to break the spirit and force the will of a child naturally so docile and so well-disposed.

I cannot, however, relate all the particulars of what followed, as not till some time after they had occurred were they made known to me by the friend to whom the unhappy Martha had related many of them, when in a state of mind bordering on frenzy from her sufferings. Martha's maid also, a faithful and worthy creature, who had lived with her from childhood, mentioned one or two circumstances that will be sufficient to shew what the unhappy girl must have endured at this period.

The maid said, that for some weeks immediately preceding her marriage, she always found in the morning her young mistress's pillow wet with tears; that on the wedding-day, after she had dressed her for the ceremony, Martha, instigated by a feeling of despair, rushed from the dressing-room, saying she would see her mother once again—she would not be so sacrificed; and hastening to her apartment (followed by the old servant, who feared for the result), and throwing herself at her mother's feet, with all the eloquence of affection implored her to save her child from her father's anger—to save her from being sacrificed by him to misery and ruin.

The mother to whom she thus appealed, instead of being softened by the sight of a grief so passionate, became but the more determined against her own child; and after bitterly reproaching her with an obstinate perverseness towards parents who had been but too indulgent towards her, called on God to witness her resolution, that, unless Martha complied with her duty, and received from the hand of her father the husband he had chosen for her, on that day she would turn her from the door, and would never see her more.

Whether these menaces were intended only to frighten the unhappy girl into compliance, or whether they were the dictates of a purpose so unnatural, it is impossible to say. But

be it as it may, combined with the awe she felt for her father, they produced the desired effect on the mind of Martha; her spirit was completely broken; and after taking an affectionate leave of her sister, who could only answer it with her tears, she said—Ah, Catherine! you take a last leave of the sister who loved you so much. Henceforth she will neither love nor be loved more—all will be a blank with her. You will see how all this will end—but, no matter, let it be so.”

At that moment it was announced to her that the carriage waited to take her to church.

“Does it!” exclaimed Martha, “then I wish it were to bear me to it in my coffin,” and without adding another word she walked down to join the bridal party, behaved perfectly quiet, and suffered herself to be led passively away to that church where her father bestowed her hand on a man as worthless as himself, a gloomy and morose tyrant, who although he knew, even from herself, that he was disliked by Martha, still had persisted in his selfish purpose; and whilst he deeply resented her dislike of him, even in the very days of his courtship, and too often let her see he did so, nevertheless had the cruelty and meanness to take the reluctant hand that the breaking heart would have deemed it a blessing to withhold from him. Painful as are all these particulars, the most distressing part of the story yet remains to be told. I shall relate some portions of it as briefly as possible, since there will be found in them circumstances of a nature that may be salutary as a lesson, but can afford no satisfaction in any other way.

During the time immediately following her marriage, without an effort at recovering her wounded spirit, Martha gave herself up to the most unmitigated sorrow. Her grief was at times silent and moody, at others wild, and even alarming; so that the very authors of her misery began to think they had gone a little too far, and to fear both for her intellects and her life. The husband, who had at first treated these sufferings in his wife with a haughty and imperious temper, finding that the sallies of his resentment made no impression on her, and thinking such a state of things was not altogether the matrimonial felicity he had expected to obtain with his young and beautiful bride, began to relent, and at length turned all his thoughts towards hopes of conciliation, and determined, if possible, to gain by his efforts an interest in her affections.

The resolution was right, but he did not go wisely to work in attempting to execute it. He was not of a character to understand Martha's, or he would have sought, by gentle and

delicate attentions, to soothe her grief, and by his own patience in bearing with it, to create in her mind a feeling for his. But instead of this, remembering that in her happier days she had been much in society, and greatly admired, he thought with her, as with the generality of women, an indulgence in all that could flatter her vanity and her pride was the way to gain an interest in her heart and insure her happiness. Accordingly, he took a large house in one of the most fashionable squares near the parks, set up the most splendid equipage, and commenced a style of living that vied with many of the highest in rank and fortune, whilst his wife was presented with jewels and dresses of the most costly kind.

Martha, though she loved him not a whit the more for all this, and could never forget he had married her against her will, nevertheless, finding her lot hopeless, wearied with her long-continued sufferings, and (as violent spirits generally do when they have no religious trust in times of trial) becoming in some sort reckless of consequences, gave herself up to such enjoyment as this new mode of life could afford with a flightiness of manner so opposite to her former self, that it astonished all who knew her. Her melancholy was gone, her reserve cast aside, and that tenderness and susceptibility, which had once so endeared her to her sister and her friends, seemed to have given place to a levity and indifference the most painful to those who had been accustomed to love her, and to be loved by her, in her better days.

In a few months all was changed; the drooping and broken-hearted Martha was now the gay, the brilliant, and the beautiful leader of follies, instead of a follower in their train. Admitted, by the claims of her uncommon charms and the fascination of her manners and accomplishments, into the society of the highest order of rank and fashion of her day, she was requited for the ambition she had felt to mingle in such circles, by meeting in them—her ruin.

It was in these scenes of gaiety and dissipation that she first became acquainted with Colonel —, a younger son of a British peer. In his exterior qualities this gentleman was of the Cassio cast; for

“He had a person and a smooth discourse,
Framed to make women false.”

In the more important qualities of the man, however, he had neither the artlessness nor the honesty of a Cassio: he was, in fact, an unprincipled seducer. Yet, though every art

was resorted to for the seduction of the beautiful Martha, the natural goodness of her mind for a long time enabled her to struggle with the affections of her heart, which, by the opportunities her own thoughtlessness had afforded, were completely won by this young and fascinating admirer. Whether she would have ultimately triumphed in a virtuous resistance of unlawful love, but for the circumstances I am about to mention, it is impossible to say; but her fall was doubtless accelerated by the spirit of indignation, indulged in even to hatred, that possessed her on learning, and very suddenly, that she had been deceived by her husband. Not only had she been made, in one sense, the victim of his deceptions (by the delusion practised on her parents to obtain their favour), but many of the most respectable and sagacious among the merchants of London had fallen into his snares, so great had been his ability in the arts of hypocrisy and deception. In a few weeks all became known; his affairs, it appeared, were embarrassed with debts to an enormous extent; he had of late been keeping up his credit by appearances, and by bills, now, like himself, for ever dishonoured. It was suspected that not even all his splendid display might have been entirely designed for the diversion of his wife. That was all over now; he became a bankrupt and a ruined man.

The wife who had shuddered at the thoughts of sharing fortunes with him in his prosperity, now shrunk from sharing with him in his adversity; though to do so is a duty that the kind and affectionate heart feels as a painful, yet a welcome, test of its sincerity. She fled from her husband and her country, and accompanying her seducer to America, there continued to live with him for three or four years. It was during this period that her sister Catherine married a worthy gentleman in Scotland. Soon after, both the parents of the sisters died: it was very generally believed the mother's death had been hastened by her disappointments about her eldest daughter.

By what circumstances, by what process of suffering, or by what degrees of conviction arising within Martha's own mind, the extraordinary changes which I have now to record were brought about, I know not, as I heard no particulars concerning this unhappy woman during her residence in America. All that ever came to my knowledge was, on the news being communicated to her that the husband she had abandoned, borne down by the load of shame which had overwhelmed him, and the ill-conduct of his wife, was at length dead, the pangs of a

late but deep sense of her degradation, of her crime, seized on her soul. Ever ardent in her feelings, her remorse was as vehement as had formerly been her resentments; her hatred of the sin in which she had lived, as strong as had been her love for him who had tempted her to its commission. Had death at that moment released her from the tortures of her newly awakened sense of shame, of self-reproach, it would have been most welcome. But death will not come at a wish. She was young, and the struggles, and misery, and remorse of many years might still be reserved for her.

And now, for the first time in her life, did she begin to turn her thoughts seriously and effectually to that only true source of comfort, the hope of God's mercy, to help her to repentance; on this she determined. Strong was her agony; equally so was her resolution; and, henceforth, she betrayed no weakness in acting up to it, but displayed a courage and perseverance that might, in some measure at least, atone for her offences.

For, although on hearing of the death of her husband, the Colonel (it was the only just part of his conduct) offered to marry her, with the most urgent and repeated entreaty, she refused the offer; and declaring that it was her intention forthwith to leave him for ever, solemnly averred that no lingering feelings of affection, no motives of consideration for her own happiness or for his, should ever induce her again to enter into that holy bond of marriage which she had already so betrayed. She protested she had but one wish in relation to this world—it was, to return to England, and there to die.

I believe that, soon after these circumstances occurred, she quitted America, and returned to her native country alone, where, in a very few months, what I have now to relate occurred. I must here state that my knowledge of it was principally derived from an old friend of the family, who had been their medical attendant from the days of Martha's infancy.

He told me that, one afternoon in the summer of 18—, he was disturbed, whilst over his glass of wine after dinner, by being called on to attend a lady, who sent for him in a somewhat strange and mysterious manner, not mentioning her name, nor affording the slightest information as to who the patient might be he was thus peremptorily required to attend. The doctor was a man advanced in life, of great ability in his profession; but he neither liked to have his skill nor his time trifled with by whimsical or mysterious persons; and as he had sometimes been disturbed from his meals and his bed by fine ladies, who, to use the old-fashioned phrase, had got the

vapours, he began to suspect something of this kind in the present case. In a very ill humour, therefore, and not till a second summons had been given, did he quit his easy chair, and his bottle of old port, to sally forth on this visit; he took his snuff-box in his hand for company. But with what different feelings did he return from that visit to those with which he had prepared to pay it!

In a small house, situated in the outskirts of London, as the solitary tenant of a poor and narrow room, on a bed shaded by the curtains to keep off the rays of light that were too strong for the eyes of the sufferer, lay, on her bed of death, the once beautiful, and now blighted White Rose—Martha! Like the flower after which she had once been called, she was still delicate and fair in the hues of her complexion; but the hollow eye, the features sunk and pinched, were but too plainly marked in every line with the characters of the grave. A woman (she was Martha's old servant), who now acted as nurse, and another female, the mistress of the lodgings, were both present, and weeping, as if they had recently been moved to tears by some discourse of the sufferer. As the doctor entered, the women rose to leave the room, saying the lady had expressed a wish to talk to him alone.

No sooner had they quitted the chamber, and the doctor approached the bedside, than the patient, evidently struggling for a composure that it was not easy to command, fixed her eyes on him with a look of so much interest, that the dulness of sinking nature for an instant forsook them, and holding out her pale hand, with a kind of convulsive sob, she asked him—if he remembered her?

"To describe" (said the doctor, in relating these circumstances,) "the shock I received at that moment, for I had not till then recognised her, would be impossible; so strange, so mingled were my feelings. My sense of pain, of sorrow, of pity for one I had known from childhood, who in her youth was all that was lovely and good in woman, was strong and deep. The story of her fall I had a thousand times heard repeated; but of her recent history I knew nothing; not even till this hour, that she had returned to England. And now to meet her again, for the first time since all these things had happened, and to see death, as I evidently did, in her face; to feel it in her very touch, as I involuntarily seized her hand and pressed it to my lips, in the first emotions of kindness on meeting again so old a friend; it was altogether too much for me; I was completely unnerved. Accustomed though I had been for more than thirty years to witness scenes of great

excitement, where to keep myself calm and to preserve my self-command had become habitual, yet I could not support this; I was altogether so overcome, that I dropped into the chair which the nurse had placed for me by the bed-side, and sobbed like a child."

The doctor then proceeded to relate the substance of what followed in this interview with the sick lady. She gave him a brief account of her return to England alone; and added, she had not long to live, and rejoiced it was so—she did not desire life. All she wished was, to live long enough once more to see her sister, to whom she had written, and who was in a distant part of Scotland. She wished, if human skill could be of use, to be kept alive till that meeting with her sister was past, and then she was prepared for all the rest. God's mercy to her had been great; she blessed Him for it; His mercy had called her to repentance—yes, before this sickness came upon her, she hoped she had truly repented, and had endeavoured to prepare herself for death; she had returned to England alone, in the hope to die there, and now that wish would be granted. She had felt desirous to see the doctor, as he was one of the very few friends remaining to her. He had ever been kind to her; she could remember him even from the days of her infancy, when all her childish ailments were made known to him, and now she would tell him the last ailments of all without disguise. The deep sense she entertained of her own sin and shame had broken her heart; she believed it had called into active life the seeds of a malady which, in all probability, lurked in the constitution, as many of her family had died of it—consumption. She thought it her duty to preserve life as long as it could be preserved, that the days of her penitence might not be cut short by any act of her own. Would the doctor, for the remembrance of old times, pardon such a one as she was for now calling him in to her assistance, to give her his help to support her through the last scenes of her unhappy life? She again held out her hand as she spoke, and smiled with that wan, melancholy look, that accompanies the smile of the wretched, who are resigned to those miseries from which they can never for a moment escape—no, not even in thought.

The doctor grasped her hand in the warmth of his feelings, and affectionately assured her that he would do all in his power for her service, and would watch over her as if she was his own child. He was too generous to drop one word that might seem like reproach; but on her touching on the subject herself, he ventured to ask her why she had not married abroad. He put the question thus delicately to avoid wounding her feelings by

any mention of the name of one who had been to her so great a source of evil—the cause of all her suffering and her shame.

She shook her head. “No, no!” she said; “there would have been no self-denial in that; and self-denial and mortification were the first steps towards the duty of repentance. The husband she had abandoned for another was dead; she could now do nothing for him; she could not seek him, and ask him to pardon the wrong she had done him as a wife; but she could return to God, and ask his acceptance of her penitence, and ask his pardon for her offence. But how could she have done this had she accepted the reward of her sin, for such it would have been to her, by accepting the hand of her seducer? How could she, with such a load of sin on her soul, offer in God’s presence a second marriage-vow, when she had so broken the first? No, she had been guilty; but, she blessed God, he had not suffered her to become hardened in that guilt; and she prayed Him to touch the heart of her betrayer, to awaken in it a like sense of his offences, and to pardon him, even as she herself hoped to be pardoned.”

Exhausted by the energy with which she felt and spoke, she nearly fainted. The doctor conjured her to calm herself, and promised to send to her an especial friend of his, a worthy clergyman of the Church of England, who, he knew, would be a comfort to her; promised to see her again himself on the morrow, when he proposed to bring with him his sister to visit her, as she was one among her old friends who, he felt assured, would sympathise with her distress. In the interval, he prescribed for her, and begged her not in the least thing to neglect herself or his injunctions. In all these particulars the good and generous hearted doctor kept his word, and the unhappy sufferer found both religious support and personal comfort in the friends he thus considerably drew around her. He offered her pecuniary aid also, did she need it, till such time as her sister could come to her relief; but Martha assured him that, by having sold some valuable clothes and jewels on her first arrival in England, she was still in possession of more money than she should live to want. She had sold these things, because she was determined not to become burdensome to her relatives or friends; and no extremity of suffering, she averred, should ever have induced her to apply to one individual, who would, she well knew, most gladly have helped her; but that could not, must not be. She had now enough left to pay every thing, and to bury her, and what needed she more?

Although soothed by the attentions of these kind friends, she expressed considerable anxiety for the arrival of her sister:

she, at length, came. The interview between the sisters was most affecting—on first meeting, neither of them could speak. Catherine threw herself on the bed, and clasping her arms round Martha's neck, wept aloud, and kissed her with the most passionate marks of mingled sorrow and affection.

"Oh, Catherine!" said Martha, "I, a degraded and guilty wretch, am not worthy to be clasped to your innocent bosom. How good in you to come to me; and to come so far! Can you forgive me? You do not despise me—you will pity me—I dare not ask you to love me."

"Not ask me to love you!" exclaimed Catherine. "No, you need not; for I love you more than life. Oh, my dear sister, my dear suffering sister! I could not help loving you—you were always so good and affectionate to me. If all the world left you, I never would. And do not talk of your not being worthy to be taken to my bosom. Oh, Martha! you were always better than I was. Remember, I was neither so hardly used, nor so tempted as you were. If I had been so, I might have fallen as you did, but I could not have repented as you have done; for I fear I could not have refused the man I loved, and who had injured me, as you have refused him who would have married you. Indeed, I do not think I could have done this—yet you did it, Martha, for the sake of doing what was right, for God's sake. Oh, Martha! never call me then your superior, for your mind was originally far nobler than mine; and God has touched your heart, to make it again worthy of His love."

In this way did the generous and affectionate Catherine endeavour to comfort and reassure her penitent and unhappy sister; and during the remainder of her illness, attended upon her with the most devoted care and love. The good clergyman also greatly consoled the afflictions of her mind; and the worthy doctor, although he could do no more to prolong the fleeting spark of life, was, with his sister, in daily attendance at her sick bed.

About a week before she died, fever came on; she was at times delirious, and during these wanderings of the brain, she was much harassed by the most distressing fancies. But in one of those intervals, when she was perfectly herself, she declared that an elegant fan, which she had purchased at a very high price in the days of her extravagance and folly, and had still retained, was now constantly, as it were, before her eyes; she could not bear it; she could not bear to think she had retained such an instance of her former folly. She implored the doctor's sister, therefore, who had so often and so kindly

come to see her, to accept the fan as a remembrance of her; and begged her to remove it, to let her know it was taken away from among the few valuable things that remained to her. Her wish was immediately complied with; and she expressed herself to feel easier after she was told the fan had been removed. Such trifles sometimes fasten on the minds of the dying, when connected with self-reproach.

On the day following this incident she seemed better, and with great composure and devotion took the sacrament, in company with her friends. The doctor, on bidding her farewell, said he should see her the next morning. In the evening, however, she sent for him again.

As he approached the bed, she said to him,—“Do you know, doctor, why I have sent for you? I feel so well to-night—that is, so well for one in my state—that I think I shall not live till the morning. It has been my prayer to be taken when my mind was not so depressed; but with the hope of salvation strong upon me; and never was it so strong as at this hour. I seem like the prodigal son, who sees his Father standing to welcome him afar off, and who is eager to run to that merciful Father’s arms. Doctor, I shall die before the morning. I wished to take my leave of you once again, and to thank you, and to pray God to bless you for all your generous care of me. Farewell!”

It was, indeed, a farewell, and for ever, that the poor sufferer thus pronounced; for though at the moment she thus addressed him, the doctor saw no symptoms about her that indicated immediate death, but thought she might still live for many days, when he approached the door on the following morning the closed windows told all—the penitent had departed to her Father’s house, no doubt to meet that rejoicing in heaven over the sinner who repenteth.

Martha was buried, as she had directed, in the churchyard of —, with no stone to tell her name, or to describe her virtues or her faults. But though thus barren of all monumental record, with a delicate and feeling remembrance of the similitude by which she was not inappropriately distinguished in the days of her youth and innocence, some friendly hand has marked the spot, by planting at the head of the little mound of earth that forms her grave—the White Rose.







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